

Privacy Policy

Drift Last updated: 19 August 2026

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This policy describes what Drift collects, why, and what it does not do. It is written to match what the software actually does — if you find a difference between this document and the app's behaviour, that is a bug and I would like to hear about it.

The short version

- Your account is a **pseudonym**. Nobody using Drift sees your name.
 - Your **exact location is never stored**, by anyone, including me.
 - There is **no advertising, no tracking, and no third-party analytics**.
 - Nothing you write is private: **messages in bottles are meant to be read by strangers**. That is the product.
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What is collected

Your account

When you sign in with Apple, Drift receives and stores:

- **An opaque identifier** from Apple. It is meaningless outside this app and is how you are recognised when you return.
- **An email address**, if Apple provides one. Most people choose *Hide My Email*, in which case this is a relay address ending `privaterelay.appleid.com` rather than a real inbox. Drift does not send email and will not add you to a mailing list.

Drift does **not** receive or store your real name, even when Apple offers it.

You are given a **pseudonym** — two invented words, like "Quiet Harbour" — and that is the only name attached to anything you do.

Your location, deliberately blurred

Drift needs a rough idea of where you are to know which water to release a bottle into, which shore to wash bottles up on, and how far you have carried one.

It never stores an exact position. Coordinates are rounded **on your device** to roughly one kilometre before they are sent, and rounded again — to as much as twenty-eight kilometres — before they are shown to anyone else or written into a bottle's history.

A bottle's passport says "Galway Bay", not an address. This is not a setting; it is how the software is built, and there is no version of it that records where you actually are.

Location permission is optional. Without it you can still read, and bottles you have already released keep travelling.

What you write

Messages in bottles are stored and **shown to other people**, attributed to your pseudonym. That is the entire point of Drift, and it is worth being blunt about the consequence: **do not write anything you would mind a stranger reading**. A message cannot be recalled once a bottle is at sea.

Messages are screened automatically before publication, and can be reported by anyone who reads one.

Purchases

Bottles are bought through Apple. Apple is the merchant: **card details never reach Drift or its servers**.

Drift stores a record that a purchase happened, which product it was, and the credits it granted, so that a purchase can be honoured and a refund reversed. This is handled with RevenueCat, which acts as a processor on Drift's behalf.

Notifications

If you allow notifications, Drift stores a device token so Apple can deliver them. It is deleted when you sign out.

Technical records

Ordinary server logs — request times, error traces — retained briefly for diagnosis. Anonymous product events (a bottle was released, a shore was checked), which carry no message content and can be switched off in Settings.

What is *not* collected

- Your real name.
- Your exact location, ever, at any time.
- Your contacts, photos, calendar, microphone, or camera.
- Any advertising identifier. There is no advertising SDK in the app.

- Any cross-app or cross-site tracking. Drift is not part of an ad network, does not build a profile of you, and shares nothing for marketing.

Who else sees your data

Four processors, each doing one job:

Who	What they handle	Where
DigitalOcean	The server and database	Toronto, Canada
Apple	Sign-in, purchases, notification delivery	—
Google (Firebase)	Notification delivery only	—
RevenueCat	Purchase validation	—
Open-Meteo	Weather, from coarse coordinates	—

Weather requests send only a coarsened position — a grid cell, not you.

Nothing is sold. Nothing is shared for advertising. Data is disclosed otherwise only if the law requires it.

How long it is kept

Your account	Until you delete it
Messages in bottles	Indefinitely — see below
Sign-in sessions	90 days, or until you sign out
Notifications	60 days
Weather records	90 days
Product analytics	180 days

Deleting your account

Settings → Delete account. It is immediate and it is not reversible.

Everything identifying you is destroyed: your Apple identity, your sessions, your devices, your notifications, your location, and the link between you and every row you ever wrote.

Bottles and their messages remain, under the pseudonym they were written with, and with nothing behind them any more.

This is a deliberate decision and you should understand it before you write anything. A bottle may have been carried by twelve people over three years, and its story is not only yours — deleting your account cannot punch holes in someone else's. What is removed is every connection between those words and you; what remains cannot be traced back.

If you want a specific message removed rather than your account, email hello@iamjaymcbride.com.

Children

Drift is not intended for children under 13, and shows messages written by strangers. The App Store rating reflects that. If you believe a child has created an account, email hello@iamjaymcbride.com and it will be removed.

Your rights

Under Canadian privacy law (PIPEDA), and under the GDPR if you are in the UK or EU, you may request a copy of your data, ask for corrections, ask for deletion, or object to processing.

Email hello@iamjaymcbride.com. I will respond within 30 days. There is no charge.

The legal basis for processing, where the GDPR applies, is performance of a contract (running the app you asked for) and legitimate interest (keeping it safe and working).

Security

Everything travels over HTTPS. Sign-in tokens are stored as hashes rather than in a form anyone could reuse, including me. The database is in Canada.

No system is perfectly secure, and I will not claim otherwise. If a breach affects your data I will tell you and the Office of the Privacy Commissioner of Canada.

Changes

Material changes will be announced in the app before they take effect. The date at the top of this document always reflects the current version.

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