

Foster Care to Personal Success

Internet Safety

You may already know how to stay safe on line, but it never hurts to be reminded. Ask your colleague Frank, who lost his entire savings because he “clicked here” and gave his account number to a fake bicycle shop.

So, because we believe in better safe than sorry, here are five suggestions for internet safety.

1. Keep your passwords private.

- NEVER save them on a website, especially not on a public computer.
- Keep a list of your passwords someplace separate from your computer.
- Change your passwords frequently – but again, keep a list so that you can find them if you forget them!
- ALWAYS log off when you leave a secure website. Don't just click out; LOG OFF. If you don't, you are still on the site and somebody else can steal your information.

2. Download safely.

- Keep your software up to date. Be sure your operating system and anti-virus software are set to automatically update. If you got your computer through ETV, this should be the default.
- NEVER open attachments from people or companies you don't know.
- NEVER (EVER, EVER) click “okay,” “I agree,” or “accept” to close a pop-up window. X out instead. Ask your colleague Katherine, who accidentally subscribed to seven magazines!
- It's fine to download software, music or videos from the internet as long as you are ABSOLUTELY certain that the website with which you are dealing is legitimate. But if you DON'T KNOW, DON'T DO IT.

3. Beware phishing emails.

Phishing emails are designed to steal your identity – and your money. They look like they come from your bank, your favorite online store, even your boss or colleague – or even from facebook. They ask you to “verify your account,” or “respond within 48 hours or your account will be closed.” They may even tell you that you've won a lottery or received an inheritance.

- They ask you to click on a link and provide personal information so that your account is verified or you can receive the \$2M you won in the lottery.
- NEVER click on such a link. And if you do, NEVER, EVER type in any of your personal information such as social security number, date of birth or bank account number.

***** If in doubt, CALL the person or company directly. NEVER answer the email. *****

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4. Shopping on line.

It's great to shop on line. You can get bargains, you can find things you'd never see at the mall, and, in fact, ETV gives you lists of textbook websites every semester. But –

- Only shop at reputable websites. You should recognize the name of the store – amazon.com, target.com, thebodyshop.com ...
- Note the URL. ONLY give your personal information if the site is secure. How can you tell?

http:// - hypertext transport protocol

https:// - hypertext transport protocol secure

When you're shopping on line, look up at the URL. On The Body Shop website, for example, the home page is <http://www.thebodyshop-usa.com>. However, if you put something in your shopping cart and go to pay for it, the URL changes to:

<https://www.thebodyshop-usa.com/checkout/>.

ONLY give your personal information if the website's URL begins with https://.

5. Log off!

Whenever you visit a website that requires a username and password, don't just close out of the website, log off. If you don't log off, you are still technically on the site and somebody could potentially access your information.

There you go. Five simple things to keep you safe on the internet.

Have fun; it can be a wonderful world out there on the internet.

But, as always, protect yourself.