



U.S. Army Information Technology Agency (ITA)

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Internet Safety and Identity Theft

The Internet is the largest pool of information and one of the largest communication platforms. Email, social networks and blogs serve as some of the most efficient means of reaching out to the masses. Search engines are lighthouses tracking the oceanic information base of the Internet. Connecting people around the world, the Internet has made this world a smaller place to live in. However, with increased usage, concerns for Internet safety have also risen. This powerful resource for information and communication can turn out to be a dangerous networking platform. Hackers trying to hamper Internet privacy and security are a threat to vulnerable users. The practice of gaining unauthorized access to confidential user information is on the rise. Unethical practices such as phishing and spamming are not simply annoying but can be associated with criminal activities. It is vital that users are aware of these risks pertaining to Internet security and take strict and secure measures to protect their online identity. Here are some basic rules for Internet safety:

-Make Sure You Are Shopping on Secure Web Sites

A website provides additional protection if it utilizes encryption technology to transfer information from your computer to the online merchant's website. Encryption scrambles personal information that you submit such as your credit card number or date of birth. See if the website's address is displayed as https://. The 's' following the http indicates that the website is secure. Also look for a closed padlock displayed next to the website address on your browser. While encryption itself is not a failsafe technology, it provides added protection and should be used when possible.

-Make Sure Your Passwords are Protected

Passwords and pin numbers are easily stolen, which is why you need to make sure that you have the most robust passwords possible. Never use your social security number, or any information that has obvious ties to you such as your parent's maiden name or your pet's name. You should use at least 8 character passwords which have a combination of upper and lower case letters along with numbers and special characters.

-Use an Alternate Identity for Online Surveys/Questionnaires

When you are filling out online surveys or questionnaires, use an alternate name. Be wary of sites that promise to send you anything for free. In most cases this is a ploy to obtain personal information from you and steal your identity.

-Use Caution When Downloading Anything from the Internet

Make sure that you never download anything by clicking on a popup advertisement or email from unknown sources. These links often lead to malicious software (malware) and when clicked can be downloaded to your computer which will then proceed to track personal information and or corrupt data on your computer.

For any questions related to this report, please contact ITA Information Assurance at:

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Reference: AR 25-2, Para. 2-8(g)

Creating Connections