



Get Smart On Online Safety

(NAPSA)—With more than 1.9 billion Web users worldwide, not everyone is equipped with the information needed to stay safe. Everyone should know which sites to trust and how to guard against online hackers and scams. Here are five smart, simple, must-know tips for online safety:

Look for Visual Cues

There are a few easy-to-recognize visual cues that identify safe websites. When conducting transactions, make sure website addresses contain “https” instead of “http” as the “s” means “secured.” Many browsers will also turn their address bars to the color green to signify the site is authentic. Lastly, scan the entire Web page for a trust mark, such as the VeriSign Trust Seal. These marks demonstrate that trusted authorities such as VeriSign, the Better Business Bureau or TRUSTe have taken comprehensive measures to certify such things as security, online business ethics or customer privacy standards.

Create Strong Passwords

Everything has a password, from online banking to e-mail to social networking accounts, and it is important not to take these passwords for granted. According to a 2010 Imperva report, the most common passwords are “123456,” “abc123” and “password1.” Stay away from these easy-to-guess passwords, don’t use the same password for more than one account and change your passwords every couple months.

Watch out for Phishing E-mails

Hackers frequently lure people through “urgent” e-mails requesting personal information or offering “too good to be true” deals. Follow the age-old mantra that if an offer sounds too good to be



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true, it probably is. Also look out for misspelled words and grammatical errors. These are telltale signs of phishing scams.

Don't Be Susceptible to Malware

The latest and most sophisticated tools among hackers include various forms of malicious software known as malware. Hackers use malware to steal sensitive data such as credit card numbers or other personal information. Protect yourself from malware by installing up-to-date security software such as Norton AntiVirus. Additionally, when surfing the Web, do not download content from suspicious sites or attempt to access sites that your browser flags as high risk.

Be Cautious Online

Don't share anything online that you wouldn't want a random stranger in the street to know, such as your date of birth, home address, phone numbers, Social Security number or mother's maiden name. These are key pieces of information a hacker needs to steal your identity and, unlike bank or credit card numbers that can be easily changed if they are stolen, much of your personal information is static and will be associated with you for years.