

ONLINE SECURITY

With all the exciting things the digital world has to offer, it's easy to overlook simple strategies that can keep us safe online.

Research shows that in terms of online security, most people fall short. [1] As a result, one in six Americans will be the victim of identity theft [2]. Since parents are the primary gatekeepers and managers of their children's Internet experience [3], it's their responsibility to protect sensitive data, maintain secure networks, and to filter and monitor access shared by their children.

This may sound daunting, but by following a few simple strategies, even adults with limited technical skills can help their families be safe and secure online.



Start by having a conversation with your entire family about choosing secure passwords and keeping them in a safe place. Learn how to back up your data and how to install anti-virus software. Adjust the privacy settings on the search engines and the social networking sites you use, and gain a general understanding of the hardware, software, and social platforms your family members visit the most. By reviewing the following guidelines you'll be well on the road to achieving online security.

Tips

- Back up your data.
- Keep all of your software current with automatic updating. These updates patch vulnerabilities that can be exploited to steal personal information.
- Install antivirus and malware protection.
- Protect your wireless network by using a network key (password), and set the password on your router, so router settings can't be changed without your knowledge.
- Use long passwords that contain a combination of letters, numbers, and symbols.
- Use different passwords for different sites and mobile devices. Never use your email username and password for social media or other logins.
- Look for "settings" or "options" on social networking sites use to manage the personal information you share.
- Secure all networks and personal devices that connect to your network. One weak link can leave all your devices vulnerable.
- Monitor and track all devices used by minors—cell phones, computers, game consoles, etc.
- Teach your children how and when to report stalking, harassment, inappropriate photos, and threats; all of these are prohibited on social media sites (like Facebook and Twitter), and often are punishable by law.