Cybersecurity Tips for Family

Securing Our eCITY Foundation

Protect Your FAMILY

As head of your household, you should consider yourself as the CIO. Securing your computers and digital devices should not be left to your children. Open discussion and proactive steps are imperative to creating a safer computing environment in the home.

TALK WITH YOUR KIDS ABOUT THEIR ONLINE HABITS

If you want help preparing to speak with your children or learning what to educate them about, try these helpful online resources:

- www.securingourecity.org
- www.staysafeonline.org

SET CLEAR RULES FOR INTERNET USE

As soon as your children begin to explore the Internet, you need to set clear rules about when and how they can use it, just as you did when they got their first bicycle. Explain the risks—why it is important to have family rules to avoid problems and keep the Internet fun for everyone. Consider the following guidelines to help create a safer online experience for your family. Visit the Securing Our eCity website resources pages and download our Internet Contract for teens and parents to confirm both parents and children understand the ground rules before engaging.

KEEP PERSONAL INFORMATION PRIVATE

Teach children to check with you before sharing personal information online unless you give them permission. Personal information includes facts, such as your child's real name, age, gender, phone number, address, school, sports team and favorite places to play. It also includes photos and feelings. Predators look for expressions of vulnerability, such as sadness, loneliness, or anger. And, they know how to use seemingly disconnected information to locate people.

USE FAMILY SAFETY SOFTWARE AND TOOLS

No single technology solution meets the needs of every family, so explore the many different tools that can help you keep your children safe online. For a list of popular family safety tools, go to http://kids.getnetwise.org/tools.

Protect Your COMPUTER AND DIGITAL DEVICES

Technology can be used to keep your computer and digital devices more secure if you remember to keep your software and firmware up to date. Remember, STOP. THINK. CONNECT.™ before you take any actions online.

Using the Internet is a privilege and a shared responsibility. Not only are there actions and behaviors you need to become familiar with to help protect your devices, but you must become aware of how to better protect all of your access points before connecting to the Internet.

USE AN INTERNET FIREWALL AT ALL TIMES

The firewall is your first line of defense in protecting your computer, because it helps to obscure your devices to online attackers and many types of malicious software.

KEEP YOUR OPERATING SYSTEM UP TO DATE, ENABLE ITS AUTOMATIC UPDATE FEATURES

Online criminals are constantly at work devising new ways to attack your computer and invade your privacy.

MAINTAIN ANTIVIRUS AND ANTISPYWARE SOFTWARE

Antivirus and antispyware software helps to protect your computer by scanning e-mail, applications and data that resides on your computer. Strong antivirus and spyware programs can detect and remove viruses and spyware before they have a chance to damage your devices.

CHOOSING YOUR PASSWORD

Perhaps one of the easiest, yet most challenging security measures that can be implemented is the regular updating of one's passwords. The objective is to remember it without writing it on a post-it that you keep next to your computer, but also making it complex enough that it is not easy for hackers to gain access to your computer. Avoid some of the following pitfalls and consider a "pass-phrase" like "mybirthdayis1970Jan15."

The top ten things to avoid include:

1. Any part of your name
2. Your account name or numbers
3. Anything less than 7 characters long *(system permitting)*
4. Any part of the name of a member of your extended family *(including pets)* or, worse, a colleague
5. Name of your computer's operating system
6. Significant numbers *(phone number, car license number)*
7. Names of locations or points of interest
8. Favorite or most-hated things
9. Easy associations with favorite or most-hated things. *(for instance "Swan_Lake" is a bad password for a ballet freak)*
10. Popular choices such as "wizard", "password", "today", "AAAAAAA", "QWERTYUIOP", etc.

Securing Our eCITY® Foundation

www.securingourecity.org

The Securing Our eCity® Foundation is helping to make a cyber-safe environment where we can live, work and play through cybersecurity awareness, education and preparation.

This piece is sponsored by ESET® North America and San Diego Gas & Electric

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