



TOP TEN CYBER SECURITY TIPS FOR TEENS, THEIR TEACHERS AND FAMILIES

1

Be a responsible cyber citizen.

If you use the Internet, you're a citizen of a global community—a cyber citizen. Just like being a citizen of your local community, being a cyber citizen has responsibilities. Use the Internet to share knowledge that makes people's lives better. Keep safe, use good manners and respect the laws.

2

Use anti-virus software.

A computer virus is a program that can invade your computer and damage or destroy information. Anti-virus software is designed to protect you and your computer against known viruses. But with new viruses emerging daily, anti-virus programs need to be updated regularly. Check with the web site of your anti-virus software company to see some sample descriptions of viruses and to get regular updates for your software. Stop viruses in their tracks!

3

Do not open email from unknown sources.

Delete email from unknown sources. Watch out for files attached to e-mails, particularly those with an "exe" extension—even if people you know sent them to you. Some files transport and distribute viruses and other programs that can permanently destroy files and damage computers and Web sites. Do not forward e-mail if you are not completely sure that any attached files are safe.

4

Use hard-to-guess passwords and keep them private.

Do not write passwords down on small pieces of paper taped to your computer. You would be surprised how many people are sloppy about keeping their passwords private. Passwords that are easy to-guess are a bad choice. In other words, if your name is "Dan" do not make your password "Dan." Change your passwords regularly and don't give your passwords to anyone! Tell your family that combinations of letters, numbers and symbols are harder to crack than just words.

5

Protect computers with firewalls.

Install firewalls for your family—it is not difficult. A firewall helps prevent hackers from breaking into your computer or the computers that belong to your family. Firewalls help prevent thieves from stealing and using private information including your phone number and credit card numbers, which may be stored on a family computer.

6

Do not share access to your computers with strangers. Learn about file sharing risks.

Your computer operating system may allow other computers on a network, including the Internet, to access the hard-drive of your computer in order to "share files". This ability to share files can be used to infect your computer with a virus or look at the files on your computer if you do not pay close attention. Check your operating system and other program help files to learn how to disable file sharing. Do not share access to your computer with strangers!

7

Disconnect from the Internet when not in use.

The Internet is a two-way road. You get information and also send information. Turning off the Internet makes sure that someone else on the Internet can't enter your computer and cause harm. Disconnecting your computer from the Internet when you are not online lessens the chance that someone will be able to access your computer.

8

Back-up your computer regularly.

Help your family back up all household computers onto external media such as CD's or diskettes.

9

Regularly download security protection update "patches".

Security flaws are regularly found in operating systems and application software. Companies that make software release quick fixes called "patches" that you should install to correct the latest software flaw. It is a good idea to check for security updates on the publisher's Web site for all the software you own.

10

Help your family to check computer security on a regular basis.

Evaluate computer security at least twice a year. To help remember, do it when you change the clocks for daylight-savings time! Check for all of the items listed previously.

