

Top Tips to Staying Safe Online

1. **Think before you click.** Never click on links in messages from people you don't know. These may be phishing emails that have links that lead to websites that can lure you into giving personal information or download malware to your computer. You should even be wary with emails from people you do know if it looks or sounds suspicious. Hackers can create a malicious email that looks like it came from your best friend's email account!

You do not need to be a seasoned computer whiz to know that it's not smart to open an attachment titled, "Claim Your Inheritance!" Using common sense while surfing the Web can protect you from losing your identity, as well as your cash!

2. **Safely peruse.** Beware of phony websites. These sites may have an address that's very similar to a legitimate site. Check to see whether there are misspellings, bad grammar or low resolution images. However, scammers are getting better at replicating sites so make sure if a site asks for personal information, that you double check the URL [**Uniform Resource Locator** used to specify addresses on the World Wide Web] and make sure it's not asking for information it shouldn't. If in doubt, search the company yourself.
3. **Shop safely.** Don't shop on a site unless it has the "https" and a padlock icon to the left or right of the URL. Also, protect yourself and use a credit card instead of a debit card while shopping online—a credit card company is more likely to reimburse you for fraudulent charges.
4. **Secure passwords.** Don't use easy to identify or guess password i.e. name and year of birth 'Sally1987' consider something harder to crack that contains letter/ numbers and other character like TW9&4yiw2pyqx#. Phrases are good too. Regularly change passwords and don't use the same passwords for critical accounts. For more tips on how to create strong passwords, go to <http://passwordday.org/>
5. **Protect your info. Keep your guard up.** Back up all of your data on your computer, smartphone and tablet in the event of loss, theft or a crash. Also, routinely check your various financial statements for questionable activity. Be cautious when using public computers that may not be secure.
6. **Personal identity and safety.** Don't tell anyone personal things about yourself - like where you live, your surname, phone number or email. Only send and post things you would be happy for your friends and family to see i.e. photos and videos. **Remember, once something is online it can be copied/ shared or posted in other places where you can't get rid of it.** Make your social media profiles private so only friends and family can see them and never accept people you don't know as friends online. Never agree to meet someone in person that you have only ever met online. Some people tell lies and may not be who they say they are.

For more information about staying safe online visit <http://www.saferinternet.org.uk/>

Stay Safe!