

8 Tips for Safer Browsing



Admit it, the Internet is an integral part of our daily lives, and just like driving down the street every day, it has its risks. Here are a few tips to keep you safe while you're surfing the Internet.

- 1. Don't rely on your browser to protect you from malicious websites.** Browsers only warn you about sites but cannot stop you from going there. Even if you have high security settings and anti-virus software, visiting a risky web site can result in viruses, spyware or worse.
- 2. Beware of windows or pages that prompt you to click a link to run software.** Malicious web sites can create prompts that look like messages from your browser or computer. If you see a pop-up you think is risky, go to the company's web site for scans and downloads.
- 3. Don't provide personal information to get something free online.** Criminals may use this data to break into personal or work accounts.
- 4. Watch for shortened URLs, and numbers, hyphens or special characters in a URL.** Scammers manipulate URLs to trick users. Be wary of URL's posted in facebook and sent via email. Use a search engine to identify the actual URL.
- 5. When you use a search engine be very careful of the result you click on.** Hackers use legitimate looking topics to trick you into clicking. Scrutinize the URL to ensure you are going to a legitimate web site.
- 6. Never trust free content.** Free movie, music and video downloads often include pirated content and just as often this content contains viruses and malware.
- 7. Vary your passwords from site to site.** When you use the same password across many sites it makes it easy for criminals to hack all of your accounts. Use more complex and varied passwords for sites with personal information such as banking sites.
- 8. Be cautious of convenient features such as auto-complete for forms or "remember your password".** Web sites can use hidden fields to steal the data from forms. Also, criminals can hijack your browsing session and steal your information if you stay logged-in to a site.

The most important thing to remember about cyber security is that you, the person driving your touchpad or mouse, are the last line of defense. Technologies such as anti-virus, safe browsers, firewalls, or anything else cannot help you if you click on the wrong link or visit the wrong web site. Be diligent, be safe.

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