Guard Your Privacy Online

You and your information are everywhere. When you’re online you leave a trail of “digital exhaust” in the form of cookies, GPS data, social network posts, and email exchanges, among others. It is critical to learn how to protect yourself and guard your privacy. Your identity and even your bank account could be at risk!

Use long and complex passwords or passphrases. These are often the first line of defense in protecting an online account. The length and complexity of your passwords can provide an extra level of protection for your personal information. Use multi-factor authentication when available and don’t reuse passwords.

Take care what you share. Periodically check the privacy settings for your social networking apps to ensure that they are set to share only what you want, with whom you intend. Be very careful about putting personal information online. What goes on the Internet usually stays on the Internet.

Go stealth when browsing. Your browser can store quite a bit of information about your online activities, including cookies, cached pages, and history. To ensure the privacy of personal information online, limit access by going “incognito” and using the browser’s private mode.

Using Wi-Fi? If only public Wi-Fi is available, restrict your activity to simple searches (no banking!) and use only SSL protected websites (HTTPS). Better protection can come from using a VPN (virtual private network) which provides an encrypted tunnel between you and the sites you visit.

Should you trust that app? Only use apps from reputable sources. Check out reviews from users or other trusted sources before downloading anything that is unfamiliar.

Protect Your Privacy

Does that post pass the billboard test? Before you publicly post, think about your audience and your future.

Check online privacy settings frequently. Review social media accounts, browsers, and mobile apps.

Consider disabling geotagging and geolocation features on mobile devices. Sharing locations can threaten your privacy or personal safety.

That can’t be unseen. It’s usually true of things you post to the internet. Be discreet and share with care!