

## How Can I Protect My Online Privacy?

You need to be proactive to protect your online privacy. There are many things you can do to ensure your personal information remains private. The most important thing you can do is to make sure your virus protection is up-to-date and is performing regular scans. Below are a few more tips you can use to protect your online privacy:

1. Never reply to emails with personal information.

Whenever you send an email, be aware that you could be giving information to any number of people, including your employer, the government, your e-mail provider, and anybody that the recipient passes your message to. If you have to send sensitive information, you should consider using encryption.

2. Use a unique password for all your important accounts.

When you use the same password across the web, a hacker can learn the password from a less secure site and then use it to compromise your important accounts. Keep your password reminders in a secret place that isn't easily visible, and if you do decide to save your passwords in a file on your computer, create a unique name for the file so people don't know what's inside. Make it a habit to use a password with a mix of letters, numbers, and symbols that is not easily guessable.

3. Use 2-factor authentication whenever possible.

When information is particularly sensitive or vulnerable, using a password alone may not be enough protection. A stronger means of authentication, something that's harder to compromise is necessary. Two-factor authentication is a security process in which the user provides two means of identification. A common example of two-factor authentication is a bank card: the card itself is the physical item and the personal identification number (PIN) is the data that goes with it.

4. Password protect your devices.

It is recommended that you don't keep private information stored directly on any mobile devices, but sometimes you must. Every mobile OS has some sort of password lock feature and it is important that you use it. If you choose a PIN code, be sure to avoid the top 5 most commonly used passwords: 1234, 0000, 2580, 1111, 5555.

5. Check your social networking exposure regularly.

If you wish to retain privacy online, it is important that you keep up-to-date with the privacy settings of the social networks that you use. The sites often change these settings in ways that can be confusing to users and you may be giving away personal information without even realizing it.

6. Clear out your cookies.

Many websites and software programs track your browsing history through cookies so that advertisers can target advertisements towards you. Running a free program regularly, such as SuperAntiSpyWare, will delete these cookies from your computer. You can also easily delete your browsing and search history from any web browser using the 'Tools' menu.

