



COMPUTER CRIME

Online crime

Computers have made such an impact on society that they are now essential for the smooth running of day to day activities. Nowadays we take computers for granted - many of the things we do at work and at home could not run without the use of computers and the Internet.

Inevitably, with this reliance on computers comes a whole new form of crime. Whether we are emailing, buying or selling online or Internet banking, online criminals want a piece of the action.



There are various ways that you can fall victim to computer crime including pop ups and viruses, spam and scam emails and fake web sites that steal your identity and your money. There is much at stake. Your privacy, your time, your cash and your reputation. But protecting your computer is easier than you think.

How do I protect my PC?

To protect your computer from on-line criminals we recommend the following;

- Install security software: anti-virus, anti-spyware and a firewall. Some security products include all three.
- Keep your computer up to date. Blocking spam emails and using an up to date web browser will make it harder for criminals to 'access' your PC.
- Regularly back up your files - just in case.
- Try not to use your computer in administrator mode. Make a user account and log in with that for day to day use.
- Stop other people freeloading by encrypting your wireless network.



Safe shopping

Online shopping and banking is safe and secure if you follow a few simple guidelines and use your common sense.

If you're shopping online, look for signs that that you are buying from a reputable company:

- Do they have an address and a phone number?
- Is their web site secure? Look for 'http://' and the golden padlock.
- Do they have clear privacy and returns policies?
- If you are not sure, trust your instinct and buy elsewhere.



If you're using an online auction site, such as eBay:

- Make sure you understand the auction process, the site rules and the auction company's own safety advice
- Check the buyer or seller's feedback. Ask questions.
- Don't give away your password or personal details.

When it comes to handing over your money, choose a safe way to pay such as PayPal or a credit/debit card.

Scam emails

Learn to spot the telltale signs of scam emails. They might promise your huge rewards, lottery wins, lost inheritances and so on and have a false sense of urgency. Often they will include requests for upfront payments or private information such as bank details. Use your common sense and if in doubt delete the email. If it looks too good to be true - it probably is.

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