

Protecting Older Americans Against Scams



Americans young and old are using the Internet and mobile devices on a daily basis. Specifically, older Americans are increasingly utilizing mobile phones, tablets, and wearables to stay connected, informed, and involved with family and friends. This increased connectivity has many advantages, but it also presents a unique set of risks for people over 65.

May is Older Americans Month, a month that celebrates the vitality of older adults and their contributions and achievements. This offers a unique opportunity to talk with the people over 65 in your life about the importance of cybersecurity.

Cyber criminals often target older Americans, believing they are more likely to fall for online scams like phishing, online fraud, and identity theft. For example, a cyber criminal may email an older adult claiming to be a real financial or government organization, like their bank or the Internal Revenue Service (IRS), asking for money or for them to share their sensitive personal information.

Learning how to protect your identity and personal information online – and how to spot an online scam – is just as important as understanding how to use the latest technology. Since cyber criminals are more likely to attack aging Americans, it is critical to equip them with the knowledge to protect themselves online. The Department of Homeland Security encourages older Americans, and all citizens, to follow these three tips to be safe online:

- Beware of “free” gifts or prizes. If something is too good to be true, then it probably is.
- Most businesses or organizations don’t ask for your personal information over email. Beware of any requests to update or confirm your personal information.
- It is important to add only people you know on social media sites and programs like Facebook and Skype; adding strangers could expose you and your personal information to scammers.

The Administration for Community Living (ACL), a Stop.Think.Connect. Campaign partner, leads the national celebration of Older Americans Month (OAM) each year. The theme for OAM 2017 is "Age Out Loud," which gives aging a new voice—one that reflects what today's older adults have to say. For more information on OCM and how to get involved, please visit <https://oam.acl.gov/>.

For more tips on how to stay safe online, please visit the Department of Homeland Security's Stop.Think.Connect. Campaign at www.dhs.gov/stopthinkconnect.

Provided By:



The information provided in the Monthly Security Tips Newsletter is intended to increase the security awareness of an organization's end users and to help them behave in a more secure manner within their work environment. While some of the tips may relate to maintaining a home computer, the increased awareness is intended to help improve the organization's overall cyber security posture. This is especially critical if employees access their work network from their home computer. Organizations have permission and are encouraged to brand and redistribute this newsletter in whole for educational, non-commercial purposes.

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