

PUBLIC SAFETY BULLETIN: CYBER SECURITY TIPS

Nearly every aspect of our lives is online, from buying toilet paper in bulk to emailing friends and family. And with so much of our personal information on our devices, protecting them from cyberattacks is essential. Below are some important tips on how to improve your cybersecurity. Do not feel pressure to implement the measures all at once and overwhelm yourself; but remember, the motto for information security is "progress, not perfection."



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The Consequences of Security Breaches and Hacks



Identity Theft: Identity theft means that someone gains hold of your Personal Identifiable Information (PII) and uses it to take out loans, commit crimes or use your credit cards, all in your name.



Account Takeovers: Account takeovers happen when someone takes over your accounts. According to research, 51% of accounts taken over are social media while another 32% are banking accounts.



Financial Losses: Whether you are a business or an individual, cyberattacks and hackings can cause you to lose money. In 2020, the average cost of a data breach in the United States was \$3.86 million according to IBM's annual Cost of a Data Breach Report.



Loss of Productivity: On average, it took businesses 280 days to identify and contain data breaches in 2020.



Loss of Reputation: For businesses, a data breach creates negative publicity.



Loss of Customers: Your business may also lose customers if their data is exposed.



Lack of Privacy: Unlike monetary losses, data privacy is priceless, especially when tech companies keep user data in droves.



Lost Access to Cryptocurrency: Got Bitcoin stored digitally? Losing your password may mean losing access to your money; cryptocurrency research found that 25% of crypto owners have had issues accessing it. In about half of these incidents, the cause was a lost or forgotten password.



Decreased Credit Scores: If your identity is stolen, that could lower your credit score making it harder to get loans, jobs and rental agreements.

10 Important Ways to Protect Your PII

1. Add two-factor authentication or multi-factor authentication to online accounts to prevent unauthorized access.
2. Do not click on unfamiliar messages as these could be phishing attacks.
3. Do not share your PII online.
4. Turn off location sharing.
5. Create a password for your mobile device.
6. Do not join public Wi-Fi networks without a VPN.

7. Disable Bluetooth when you are not using it.
8. Only use public charging stations with an AC outlet, a USB data blocker or a charge-only USB adapter.
9. Back up your data in encrypted cloud storage.
10. Factory reset your devices before you dispose of them.

While there are more than 10 cybersecurity steps to protect your identity, the above are some of the most critical. Cyber thieves are ready and waiting to take advantage of any opportunity to access your PII so stay alert and take the necessary steps to prevent yourself from becoming a victim.



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