

Safety Tips for Social Networking

Social networking sites such as Facebook, Twitter and LinkedIn have become extremely popular. They're a great way to keep family and friends updated on your life and connect with colleagues and communities that share your interests. You can use social networks to build a positive online reputation.

Protect Your Personal Information

Since social networking sites are about sharing, you may be prompted or tempted to reveal personal information. Make sure you are comfortable with the information you share. Draw the line between what's okay to share and what's best kept private.

- **Secure your accounts:** Ask for protection beyond passwords. Many account providers now offer additional ways for you to verify who you are before you log into that site.
- **Make passwords long and strong:** Combine a minimum of eight capital and lowercase letters with numbers and symbols to create a more secure password.
- **Unique account, unique password:** Use separate passwords for every account.
- **Own your online presence:** When available, set the privacy and security settings on websites to your comfort level for information sharing. It's ok to limit who you share information with.
- **A good online reputation is a good thing:** Recruiters often respond to a strong, positive personal presence online. So show your smarts, thoughtfulness, and mastery of the social networking environment.

Connect with Care

When you use social networks you are joining a global community, therefore, it's smart to approach social networking with a degree of caution. Remember that people may not be who they say they are. If one of your friend's accounts is compromised, you could get spam and suspicious posts.

- **When in doubt, throw it out:** Links in tweets, posts, and online advertising are often the way cybercriminals compromise your computer. If it looks suspicious, even if you know the source, it's best to delete.
- **Do not supply your IDIR credentials outside of government:** Social networking sites often request your Outlook User ID and password. Do not supply your IDIR credentials when you receive these requests. Providing your Outlook credentials allows social networking site to access your Outlook contacts. Your credentials could also be used by others to logon as you and access your personal information or BC government data.

Be a Good Online Citizen

Social networks work best when people maintain the same level of courtesy online as they would in other situations.

- **Safer for me, more secure for all:** What you do online has the potential to affect everyone – at home, at work and around the world. Practicing good online habits benefits the global digital community.
- **Post only about others as you would have them post about you.**
- **Know what action to take:** If someone is harassing or threatening you, remove them from your friends list, block them, and report them to the site administrator.

Keep a Clean Machine

You can't be safe and secure if the technology you are using is vulnerable.

- **Keep security software current:** Having the latest security software, web browser, and operating system are the best defences against viruses, malware, and other online threats.
- **Use a firewall:** Many personal computer operating systems include software-based firewalls to protect against threats from the Internet.
- **Run an anti-virus scan on a regular basis:** Anti-virus software is used to prevent, detect, and remove malware, including but not limited to computer viruses, computer worms, trojan horses, spyware and adware.

Additional Resources:

Facebook Help Center

<http://www.facebook.com/help/>

Twitter Help Center

<http://support.twitter.com/>

LinkedIn Help Center

<https://help.linkedin.com/>

Information Security Branch - Security Awareness

<http://www.gov.bc.ca/informationsecurity>

Stop. Think. Connect

<http://www.stopthinkconnect.org/>

Get Cyber Safe

<http://www.getcybersafe.gc.ca/index-eng.aspx>

An Information Security Perspective on the Safe Use of Social Media: Suggestions from the CISO on Balancing Risks and Opportunities

http://www2.gov.bc.ca/assets/gov/british-columbians-our-governments/services-policies-for-government/information-management-technology/information-security/information-security-awareness/information_security_perspective_safe_use_of_social_media.pdf