

## Computer Do's and Don'ts

Here are a few helpful pointers for your computer experience.

### DON'T

Store personal information on your computer or PDA. Stored data is always open to hackers. Consider storing passwords on CD's or disks that you keep locked in a box or closet.

Shop on-line without being sure of two safety features. Check the order page for the lock icon at the bottom. This way you know the system is encrypted and your personal data is transferred safely. The URL on the address bar should say "https", the "s" stands for secure.

Store credit card information on a website. It may be more convenient, but it's not safe.

Open or answer any unfamiliar e-mails. Just opening an email with an attachment, can add a worm to your computer. If you really think it might be from someone you know, hit reply and ask them to identify themselves. If that doesn't work, you know it's junk.

Fall for phishers. Phishing is a new scam. There are cyber crooks looking for information. They ask for your credit card numbers and social security information, phone numbers or even email addresses. Never respond to these emails.

Use obvious passwords. Don't use anything connected to your social security number. Don't use combinations of numbers and letters. Don't use anything with your mother's maiden name or your birth date.

### DO

Use virus and spyware protection.

Without virus and spyware protection your computer is an open door to hackers and virus spreaders. Norton and McAfee use the most up-to-date anti-virus protection available. Always get their security updates every 2 weeks.

Completely erase your hard drive, if you throw away or give away your old computer. There are free downloadable programs to scrub the system before you give or throw it away. Try Sure Delete by ([www.wizard-industries.com](http://www.wizard-industries.com)) and CodeTek's Safeshred Free for Macs.

Use only one credit card on the internet

This way if your information falls into the wrong hands you can cancel it. Always use a different credit card out in the "real world."

And to be sure you are not a victim of identity theft, get a copy (every year) of your credit report from all 3 major credit bureaus.

Equifax (800-685-1111) [www.equifax.com](http://www.equifax.com)

Experian (888-397-3742) [www.experian.com](http://www.experian.com)

Trans-Union (800-916-8800) [www.transunion.com](http://www.transunion.com)

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