iSAFE

Internet Safety Tip: Carefully Select Your Usernames and Passwords

If you are like most other Internet users, you use a select few usernames and passwords for all of your online activities. While the thought of creating and remembering multiple usernames or passwords can be daunting, it is important that you are thoughtful when creating your accounts online. Here are a few tips to help you ensure computer and personal safety when using the Internet.

• **NEVER select your password to match your username.**

• **NEVER use passwords that contain info about yourself, family, pets, significant dates, or other personal info that someone could figure out if they knew anything about you.**

• **NEVER use the same password or username on all of your accounts.** If you have used the same password over and over and a hacker acquires it, that person would have no problem accessing the rest of your accounts. Criminals can figure out where you have accounts, or get lucky by trying a number of banking, credit card, or other Web sites with your usernames or passwords.

• **AVOID using words that are in the dictionary.** The best passwords consist of six to eight random alpha-numeric characters using both upper and lower case (ex: 2voNj89!).

• **AVOID adding a number in front, behind, or simply reversing a word** (such as angel1 or 1legna).

• **NEVER give your password to anyone.** No one, including your ISP, bank, or online retailer should ever need you to tell them your password. If you've forgotten your password, use the password retrieval tool present on the Web site.

• **BE AWARE of "shoulder-surfers" who may be watching as you are logging in to accounts or Web sites.**

• **CHANGE passwords frequently.**

• **STORE your passwords securely where passing traffic cannot see.**

• **ERASE the hard drive of your computer completely, using a file-wipe utility when you sell it, give it away, or replace its hard drive.** Simply deleting the data will not completely remove it from your hard drive and criminals could use a data recovery tool to access the data hiding on your hard drive.

About i-SAFE

Founded in 1998 and active in all 50 states, i-SAFE Inc. is the leader in Internet safety education. i-SAFE is a nonprofit foundation whose mission is to educate and empower students, parents, seniors, and community members to safely and responsibly take control of their Internet experiences. i-SAFE provides knowledge that enables them to recognize and avoid dangerous, destructive, or unlawful online behavior, and to respond appropriately. This is accomplished through dynamic K through 12 curriculum and community-outreach programs to students, parents, law enforcement, and community leaders. i-SAFE is the only Internet safety foundation to effectively combine these elements. www.isafe.org