

Staying safe on social media (Facebook, Twitter, etc.)

Social media platforms have become an integral part of online lives. Statistics show 3.48 billion people worldwide now use social media. That is 45% of the total world population! Over 70% of the public uses at least one social media site and the average American has 7 social media accounts.ⁱ

Social networks are a great way to stay connected with others, but you should be wary about whom you connect with, how much personal information you post and with whom you share it. As the popularity of these social sites grows, so do the risks of using them. Spammers, identity thieves, and other criminals follow the traffic.



Take these simple steps to connect with confidence and safely navigate the social media world:

- **Stranger Danger** - while some social networks might seem safer for connecting because of the limited personal information shared through them, keep your connections to people you know and trust. A good rule of thumb is to only accept friend requests from people you know offline. When you receive a request from someone, you can verify it was from them by sending them an email asking for confirmation.

If you receive a request to connect with someone you know, but who you thought was already a friend or follower, double-check your friends-list before accepting the invitation. If the sender is already on your list, chances are likely their account has been hacked.

Scammers use bogus accounts cloned from real users to collect "friends," and rely on these "mutual friends" to extend their fake networks. The fake account may use photos from you or your friend's real account to trick you as well. If you ever come across such a situation, Facebook has a [provision for reporting these impostors](#) that automatically notify the friend who's being impersonated as part of the process. On [Twitter](#) and [Instagram](#), impersonated persons must report phony accounts themselves, so message your followers to let them know they are being misrepresented.

- **Update Privacy Settings** - check the settings in your social accounts to make sure your phone number and email addresses are hidden from public view. Here are a few platform-specific recommendations:

- [Consider adjusting Facebook privacy settings](#) to make your posts visible only to friends or friends of friends, rather than making them public.
- [Uncheck the "Discoverability" boxes in Twitter's safety and security controls](#) to prevent searches using your email address and phone number. If you are only using Twitter for private communications, consider checking the "Protect your tweets" box, which limits your posts' visibility to your followers.
- On Instagram, if you plan to share personal images consider [setting your account to private](#).

- **Be Discreet About Your Whereabouts** - take care to avoid sharing your address, which can help thieves target your home. Also, be careful about broadcasting when you are traveling for extended periods when your vacant home could become a target.

Bear in mind that you can disclose this information inadvertently, without typing a thing, if you allow your posts or images to be tagged with your location on your mobile device. To prevent that, you can disable location tagging:

For the apps on your mobile devices, you must go to your settings and can change the settings for the specific apps - [Facebook](#), [Twitter](#) and [Instagram](#)

As we spend more time than ever in front of our screens, National Cybersecurity Awareness Month 2019 emphasizes personal accountability and stresses the importance of taking simple, proactive steps to enhance cybersecurity at home, in the workplace, and on the go. As you engage online, staying alert and following these few smart practices, can help you socialize safely.

Thank you for joining us this first week of October, recognizing National Cybersecurity Awareness! We look forward to bringing you more helpful tips on phone security, backups, email management, and safe browsing throughout the month. For any questions, please reach out to us at 1-800-373-7521, helpdesk@ssndcp.org or visit us online @ <https://www.ssndcentralpacific.org/it-resource-center/security-awareness>

ⁱ Statistics courtesy Kemp, Simon. "Digital 2019: Global Digital Overview." DataReportal. January 30, 2019. <https://datareportal.com/reports/digital-2019-global-digital-overview>