

At the same time, it is important to establish and maintain consistent online safety and privacy practices while surfing the Internet. Why is this important?

- Helps you control the amount of knowledge and information others, such as websites and companies, have about you and your online activities without your consent.
- Helps to make sure that the information you do provide is given in a safer, more secure environment.
- Protects your computer from viruses, scams and other malware, which can affect not only an individual's computer, but an entire network.
- Helps you to have a more comfortable, safe, and private experience on the Internet with less risk.



Project GOAL is a new voice to promote broadband adoption by older adults. Project GOAL raises the profile of the challenges confronting the older adults online, and identifies new, innovative technologies for this community.

You Can Stay Safe and Protect Your Privacy Online



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The Internet provides a world of opportunity and benefits for older adults:

- Live in your home longer and maintain a higher quality of life
- Stay connected to family and friends. Join social networks, exchange photos, watch videos and send birthday cards. You can also access various services, such as online grocery shopping or get help filling out medical forms. Play bridge or share information about vacation spots.
- Develop a support network that includes health care professionals. Services such as telemedicine and remote medical monitoring can help you do the things you enjoy without repeated trips to the doctor's office.



When online, here are some pointers on how to stay safe, secure and help maintain your privacy:

- To keep your computer secure, install a firewall, antivirus, antispymware, and antispyware software. Keep all software current with automatic updates.
- Select strong passwords. Use at least 8 characters, with upper and lower case letters, numbers and symbols. Change your passwords every few months.
- Avoid using the same password for every site.
- Establish personal protocol for determining when it is appropriate to give out personal information. Talk with a friend or family member who is online and ask them to help you establish your own guidelines for giving out your personal information.
- Remember, what goes online, stays online. Information published online can be there indefinitely and is virtually impossible to erase. Read a websites' privacy policies to learn how they are using your information.
- Learn how to identify e-mail scams and fraudulent websites.
- Have a healthy skepticism about everyone you "meet" online.
- Check the e-mail addresses of the sender carefully; some scammers use addresses that purposely misspell a recognizable company, such as a national bank name.
- Only enter credit card information when on a secure, protected site: secure websites have the letter "s" either in front or after the "http" (in front of the "www") of a web address.
- Never provide personal financial information in response to an unsolicited request. If a bank or credit card company asks for information out of the blue, don't provide it. Never include your social security number or bank account numbers in the text of an e-mail.
- Be wary of any unsolicited e-mails — or any e-mails that make extraordinary offers. Remember the golden rule: if the deal sounds too good to be true, it probably is! Scammers are getting more and more creative.

Remember, you can take advantage of all the great benefits the Internet offers the older adult community while staying safe, secure and maintaining your privacy.