

Top Tips for Staying Safe Online

1. Protect yourself online: if you wouldn't show it to your mum, don't post it!
2. There is help available: all the social networking sites have advice and can offer help – services like **CEOP** can support you <https://ceop.police.uk/safety-centre/> .
3. Protect your identity: keep passwords safe and use the locks on your phones and computers.
4. Remember: online friends are still strangers.
5. Respect the privacy of others: don't post images or information about others that could harm or embarrass them.



To make sure you don't share too much information online follow these ten tips.

1. Watch your back

Whenever you're about to post something online, pause and just imagine someone in authority, someone you respect, reading that post or looking at that photo. If that feels uncomfortable, don't do it.

2. Got a nickname?

Think about using a nickname instead of your real name if you're signing up to a microblogging site like Twitter.

Consider setting up a separate, personal email account to use with social media sites, rather than using your work, or even your main personal email. Remember, only connect to people you know.

3. Check your settings

Use the privacy and security settings on social media sites so that only friends and family can see your pages.

Then speak to friends and family and encourage them to tighten their privacy settings too as they could affect you.

Even if your account is locked as private, personal information you have shared with others could still be accessed through their pages.

4. Mother's maiden name

Don't use your mother's real maiden name as a password or as a bank security answer. It doesn't really matter whether you use the real one so make up a name that only you know. Just make sure you remember it.

5. Guard personal information

Don't post any personal information- your address, email address or mobile number - publicly online. Just one piece of personal information could be used by a complete stranger to find out even more. If you want to include your birthday in your profile it's safer not to actually display it publicly - providing your full date of birth makes you more vulnerable to identity fraud.

6. Photos and videos

Be careful about which photos and videos you share on social media sites - avoid photos of your home, work, school or places you're associated with. Remember, once you've put a picture of yourself online, other people may be able to see it and download it - it may not just be yours anymore.

7. Check what's needed

Don't give out information online simply because it's asked for - think whether whoever is asking for it, really needs it. When you're filling in forms online, for example to register with a website or sign up for a newsletter, always provide the minimum information possible.

8. Direct message if you can

It's almost always possible to send a direct message or private message on social media platforms. If you're having a personal chat, this is the best option to go for - unless you don't mind sharing your conversation with millions of other users. Alternatively, send an email from a private account.

9. Delete old accounts

If you've stopped using a social media site or forum, then close your account down. There's no point in leaving personal information out there unnecessarily.

10. Get anti-virus software

Make sure you have anti-virus software installed on your computer and be careful what you download or install on your computer.