Searching the Internet Safely

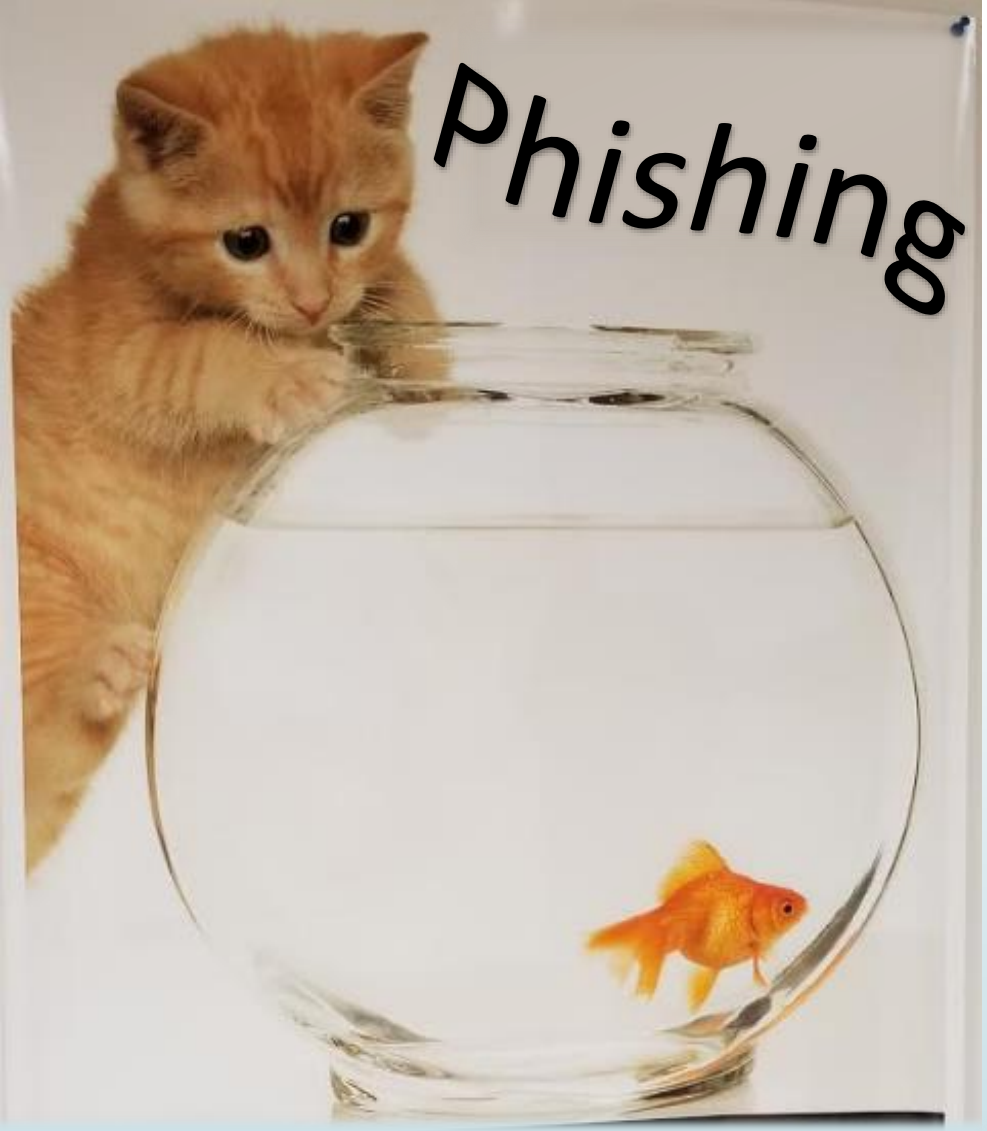
Spring 2025

New to the Internet?

- Here are some links for learning more about the Internet
- https://www.lifewire.com/internet-101-beginners-quick-reference-guide-2483357
- https://edu.gcfglobal.org/en/internetbasics/
- http://www.seniorsguidetocomputers.com/internet.asp

Basic Search Strategies with Google
from GCFGlobal.org via YouTube

Staying Safe While You Search



Hackers and Other Threats

- Viruses
- Identity Theft
- Phishing
- Scams
- Ransomware
- Hijacked Email
- Bloatware
- Adware
- Popups
- Unwanted Toolbars and Downloads
- AI aided attacks

Security Software

- Top software constantly shuffling
- Evaluating Security Software
  - Safety Detectives – links with discounts
  - PC Magazine
  - Cyber Magazine
  - Tech Radar
  - AV Test – Independent testing

AhnLab, Avast, AVG, Avira, Baidu, Bitdefender, Bkav, BullGuard, Check Point, Comodo, Cylance, Emsisoft, EnigmaSoft, ESET, F-Secure, Fortinet, G Data, Heimdal Security, K7 Security, Kaspersky, Lavasoft, Malwarebytes, McAfee, Microsoft, eScan, Northguard, Norton, Panda, PC Matic, PC Tools, TotalAV, 360, Quick Heal, Sophos, Surfshark, 腾讯安全管家, ThreatTrack, total defense, Trend Micro, Vipre, Webroot

Free Security Software

- **Microsoft Defender** – Access through Windows Security app
  - **Windows 10 (support ends 10/14/25)**
  - **Windows 11**
- **Free Antivirus for Macs**
  - **macOS has Xprotect built in**
- **Free for All**
  - **Avast**
  - **AVG**
  - **MalwareBytes**

Securing Internet Hardware

- Modems, Routers and Gateways
  - Without Password Protection – Anyone Can Hack into Your Online Computers
  - New Internet Hardware comes with Password Protection
  - Older Hardware can be Password Protected
    - Find original manual
    - Look up your model online & download instructions

Use Strong Passwords!!!

- Long passwords are harder to crack (at least 12 characters)
- Use all allowed character types
  - Alpha (A-Z) – upper and lower case
  - Numeric (0-9)
  - Special Characters (!, #, $, *, _, -, etc.)
- Make up acronyms
  - My Dog Has Fleas, and so do my five cats! = mDHF,&sdm5c!
- Test your passwords https://www.security.org/how-secure-is-my-password/
- Create a password system to use different passwords for different websites

2-Step Verification
a.k.a. multi-factor authentication

- Adds extra security in case a password is hacked
- Sign in using 2 factors
  - Something you know (password, personal info)
  - Something you have (cell phone, email, authenticator)
- Recommended for monetary and personal identity accounts like banking and health records

Private Browsing Mode

- Let's you browse without accepting cookies or trackers
- Most browsers offer private browsing
  - Chrome uses Incognito Mode (Ctrl+Shift+N)
  - Bing uses InPrivate browsing (Ctrl+Shift+N)
  - Mozilla Firefox uses Private browsing (Ctrl+Shift+P)
  - Safari was the first to offer Private Windows (Cmd+Shift+N)
- Phones and Tablets
  - Android – 3-dot menu > New incognito tab
  - Apple – varies by device

VPN (Virtual Private Network)

- VPN Software creates a secure connection
  - Private browsing history
  - Hides physical location
  - Provides anonymity
  - Encrypts your output
- Possible disadvantages
  - May slow your internet speed
  - Cost

Additional reading:
https://whatismyipaddress.com/vpn

Be Alert – Check Your Location

- Look for **https://** at the beginning of the address bar when viewing sensitive websites or data
- Hover mouse over links and check for the real address before clicking
- If a site doesn't look quite right, double check the address bar

Download Cautions

- Internet downloads have a well-earned reputation for containing malware and bloatware
- Download only from reputable sites
  - Check the URL for https
  - Know or research your download provider
- Read everything as you install
  - Bloatware often accompanies free software, even when from a reputable provider

If Your Email Is Hacked

- Change Your Password
- Enable Multi-factor Authentication
- Alert Your Contacts
  - Hint: Put yourself in your address book so you get a copy if you're hacked
- Use Your Email Provider's Website
  - Link to report abuse
  - Usually found under "Contact Us" or "Support"
- Better Business Bureau assistance: https://scamsurvivaltoolkit.bbbmarketplacetrust.org/

Scams

- Email Hijacking
  - Gathering addresses illegally
  - Spoofing
- Phishing
  - Masquerading as a trustworthy entity
  - Gathering sensitive personal information
  - Chip Scam spoofs bank phone number

Report Fraud

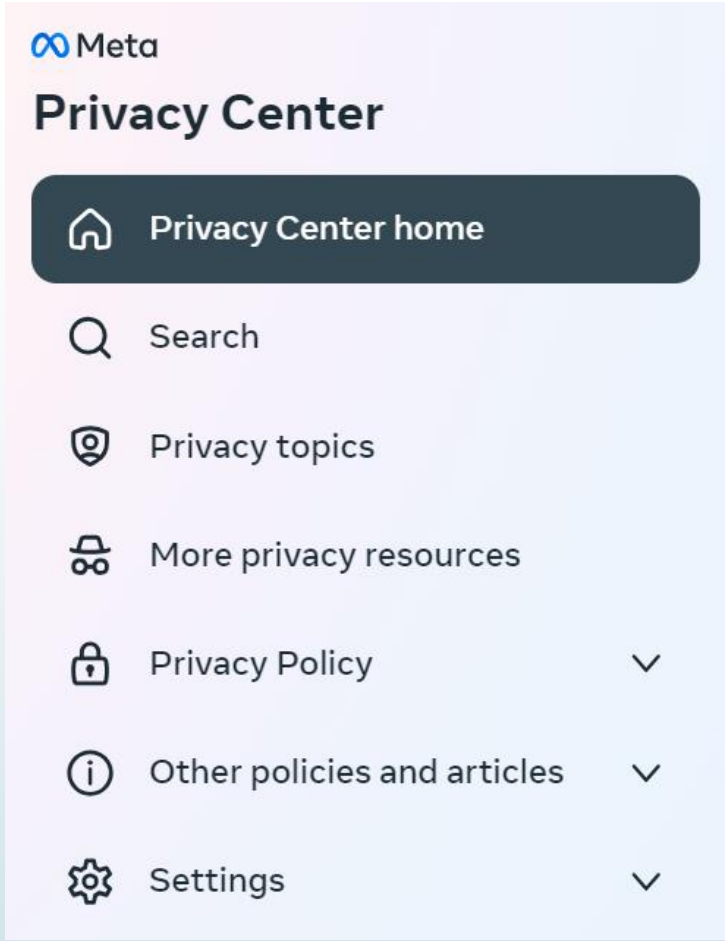
- Report Scams and Fraud
  - USA.gov offers links to report various scam types
- Forward phishing emails to reportphishing@apwg.org
- Report phishing texts to SPAM (7726) or
  - ReportFraud.ftc.gov

Stay Secure on Social Media

- Use Privacy Settings
- Check out what others see on your page
- Be careful what you post
- Be aware of how your accounts interconnect
- Consider using “false” data about yourself when sensitive information is required

Privacy on Facebook

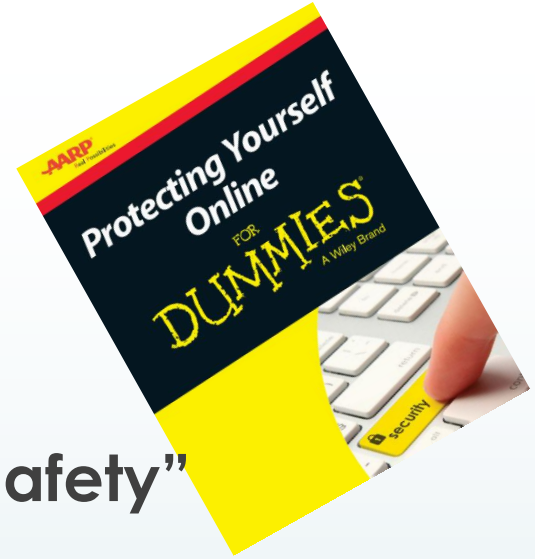
- Search “View as”
  - Learn what others see (Public vs Friends)
- Right-click your avatar
  - Visit Settings & Privacy to change your settings
- Manage Profile settings
  https://www.facebook.com/privacy/center/
  - Go To Facebook Settings to control several factors



Stay Safe Shopping

- Use Well-Known, Secure Internet Sites
  - Internet Site also has Bricks and Mortar stores
  - Internet Site has https: in URL or takes the shopper to a secure https: link to complete the purchase
- Set up an email account specifically for shopping
- Use a strong passwords for your accounts
- Use a low limit credit card for purchases or
- Use PayPal or Google Wallet to complete a purchase
  - Consider low limit bank account
- Trust your gut and/or check with the BBB

Stay Informed



- Read AARP's "Protecting Yourself Online"
  - Especially Chapter 5 – "Shopping and Banking Safety"
- AARP also offers: http://www.aarp.org/money/scams-fraud/
- US Government Consumer Protection site: https://www.usa.gov/scams-and-frauds
- Federal Trade Commission: https://www.consumer.ftc.gov/features/scam-alerts
- Alerts from your bank and other financial institutions
  - Chase Security Education
- Be aware of breaking news about scams

Seven Safety Moves You Can Make

1. Use reputable Internet Safety software and keep it updated
2. Be careful where you click (hover pointer to check the link or press and hold touch screen)
3. Immediately close web pages that open unexpectedly (Alt+F4 or Esc)
4. Pop-up Blockers – check settings in browser
5. Buy genuine, recognized software and register it
6. Keep your software up to date
7. Regularly backup important files to external drive, cloud or backup service

Other Resources

- Avoiding Online Scams from McAfee
- Internet Plans & Discounts for Seniors
- GCF Global- A Great Place to Learn
- Tech Life Unity - https://www.techlifeunity.com/
- Angie's Pages
  - Website – https://angitech.me/
  - Free Handouts – Angie's Cloud
    - Temporarily unavailable
  - Contact Angie