



OFFICE OF INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY

Topic 3: Storing Sensitive Data

Everyone loves the identity theft commercials that seem to be everywhere. However, identity theft is not a funny issue. For those who have experienced having their identity taken from them, it is an excruciating experience and it affects more than just the person whose identity is stolen. If the victim has a spouse or family, it affects them too.

The world today is a different environment from what it once was. The technological age has provided criminals a new frontier of crime to exploit. Crime scenes are no longer muggings or robberies committed in dark alleys. Today the crime scene is your living room, home office, or workplace. Criminals no longer have to break through a window or pick a lock to invade your home and life; they just enter via the internet and remove the personal information that you have stored for private use believing it to be safe.

The first objective of a hacker is to break into your computer and steal your information; so it is very important that you make this as difficult as possible. There are ways to protect you, your family, and your friends from this unseen predator.

- Make sure that you have your machine protected with a strong password
- Make sure that your computer is patched (operating system and applications)
- Practice smart internet habits when performing financial transactions online. Be selective of the sites you visit and check for the security level of web pages that require you to enter personal information.
 - When entering your personal information on a website, make sure that the website is encrypted. To do this, look in the browser window for an object that looks like a lock. This lock signifies that the website is encrypted.
 - Check the address line in the browser window for an address that starts with **https://**. This is another indication that the web site is secured.

These methods will go a long way in protecting you and your personal sensitive data from theft. You can find more information about strong passwords at our Password page.

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