

Internet & Computer Safety

If you are in danger, please call one of the following:

- 911
- Your local hotline **978.388.1888**
- The toll free number at SafeLink: 1-877-785-2020
- The national Domestic Violence Hotline at 1-800-799-SAFE(7233)

Caution: An abuser can discover your Internet and computer activities

The safest way to find information on the Internet is to use a safer computer at your local library, trusted friend's home, work or internet cafe.

Email is not a safe or confidential way to talk to someone about the danger or abuse in your life, please call us instead.

**24/7 HOTLINE
(978) 388-1888**

We are glad you have discovered our site and we hope it has provided you with useful information and resources. We want to caution you that communication over the Internet is not confidential.

There are hundreds of ways that computers record everything you do on your computer. The information you look at, the emails you send and receive and any work that you do on the computer can be traced.

If you are concerned that your abuser may try to track your activities on the internet, there are a few things you can do to reduce the likelihood of finding the history of the sites you have visited, the emails you have sent, or the documents you have written, but THESE STEPS MAY NOT COMPLETELY HIDE YOUR "FOOTPRINTS" OR INTERNET AND COMPUTER ACTIVITIES.

Tips on Internet and Computer Safety

1. Do not store passwords, as it makes it extremely easy for the abuser to access information.
2. Choose passwords that are not easy to guess, such as a combination of letters and numbers. In addition, change your password often.
3. Keep all personal files on a disk and set options to require a password to access each and every file.
4. If harassing emails are received, print them out and save them as evidence.
5. Delete emails from the "Send" box (sometimes called the "Outbox") and then also delete the email from the "Deleted Items" box.
6. Empty the "Recycle Bin" before shutting down the computer. The Recycle/Trash Bin holds all deleted files until it is manually emptied. Until it is manually emptied, the abuser will be able to see files that have been deleted, since they have not permanently left the computer.

Emptying the Recycle Bin deletes all items from sight.

7. If possible, use web-based email services like Yahoo or Hotmail and you can access your mail from anywhere. Their systems are much more strictly regulated, and therefore safer than personal services such as AOL.

Tips for "Surfing the Net" or Using Web-Browsers

Browsers like Netscape, Internet Explorer, and AOL are designed to leave traces behind indicating where you've been on the Internet. If an abuser knows how to read your computer's history or cache file (automatically saved web pages and graphics), he or she may be able to see information you have viewed recently on the Internet.

When using web-browsers, these steps can reduce the list of websites users have visited. They include erasing the memory cache, the history and the location bar list. The directions are as follows:

For Internet Explorer

1. Click on the TOOLS menu; choose INTERNET OPTIONS; then choose the GENERAL tab at the top. In the section called "Temporary Internet Files", click on "Deleted Files" to clear your cache. On the same screen, in the section called "history", press the CLEAR HISTORY button to erase your history list.

2. When using Internet Explorer, there is a function which will complete a partial web address automatically, giving the abuser the entire address the victim has visited. This option can be found and changed on the MS Internet Explorer page by clicking on the "VIEW" icon at the top, then "INTERNET OPTIONS" and the "ADVANCED" tab. About halfway down there is a "USE AUTOCOMPLETE" box that can be checked and unchecked by clicking on it. Make sure it is NOT checked.

For Netscape Navigator

1. Click on the EDIT menu; choose PREFERENCES; choose ADVANCED; then choose CACHE. Click on both "Clear Memory Cache" and "Clear Disk Cache". Then hit OK.

2. Click on the EDIT menu; choose PREFERENCES; then choose NAVIGATOR. A "Clear History" button will appear, then choose OK.

3. Click on the EDIT menu; choose PREFERENCES; then choose NAVIGATOR, click on the "Clear Location Bar" button the bottom of the window, then choose OK.

For AOL

1. Version 4.0: Pull down My AOL menu; select PREFERENCE. Click on WWW icon. Then select CLEAR HISTORY.

2. Version 6.0: Pull down SETTINGS menu; select INTERNET PROPERTIES. Then select CLEAR HISTORY.

Other browsers will be slightly different, but in any case, what you need to do is reduce your CACHE (or "temporary files") and HISTORY list. Remember that erasing these lists is not infallible; a computer expert may still be able to trace any websites that were visited. Still, these precautionary steps will help cover the user tracks and decrease the likelihood of discovery.

After you have cleared your cache, you may want to visit other sites that you think your partner would NOT object to; that way, the missing information is less likely to be noticed.