Cyber Security Tips

1. Use antivirus software and keep it up to date.
2. Don't open e-mails or attachments from unknown sources. Be suspicious of any unexpected e-mail attachment, even if it appears to be from someone you know.
3. Protect your computer from Internet intruders. Use firewalls.
4. Regularly download security updates and patches for operating systems and other software.
5. Use hard-to-guess passwords. Mix upper and lower case letters, numbers and other characters, and make sure they are at least eight characters long.
6. Back up your computer data on disks or CDs regularly.
7. Don't share access to your computer with strangers. Learn about file-sharing risks.
8. Disconnect from the Internet when not in use.
9. Check your security on a regular basis. When you change your clocks for daylight-savings time, reevaluate your computer security.
10. Make sure all family members know what to do if the home computer becomes infected.

Practice Safe Surfing

   While we make every attempt to protect our surfers from virus attacks and other malware, essential protection from viruses, hackers, and privacy threats is critical for online business owners. There are a lot of viruses out there. But some aren't really out there at all! Following is some helpful information to research virus and virus hoax information, and some free programs to help you fight the constant threats.

Several reputable virus software companies provide up-to-date information on the latest virus threats. Many of our members successfully use these free virus protection programs and they have all been reviewed by reputable sites. However, as with all freeware programs, there are no guarantees that they will not conflict with other programs on your computer.

Tips For Safe Online Chatting

1. Position the computer in your main living space and make sure the monitor faces OUTWARD into the room so there is no secrecy. This is the single MOST valuable thing you can do for your child's health and safety online.
2. Work as a team to set your boundaries. Discuss with your child exactly what is OK and what is not OK regarding what kind of Web sites are appropriate for them to visit, which chat rooms to visit and what kinds of things to talk about there. Set logical consequences for when your child disregards your rules (like grounded from the Internet for 1 week), but do NOT threaten to ban the Internet forever.
3. Stress to your child that they need to tell you if they get any weird or upsetting messages while chatting, and that you will not be angry with them nor will you ban the Internet as a result. Make it clear to the child that you understand that the child cannot control what other people say to him or her and that they are not to blame if this happens.
4. Set strict time limits for Internet chat use and enforce them. Internet addiction is a real thing!
5. Make it clear to your child that people in chat rooms are ALWAYS strangers, no matter how often they chat to them, and no matter how well they think they know them, and that while they may be good or bad people, they are still strangers. Your child should therefore not always believe everything people say in chat rooms.
6. Make sure your child understands that they are never to tell a person online their real name, their school, their phone number or where they live.
7. Do not permit your child to be left alone in cyberspace for long periods of time - this is when they are most vulnerable. Make sure that their chat time occurs when YOU are around in the house so that you can check in on them regularly.
8. Be sure to stress to your child that they are to behave politely and respectfully at all times while chatting online with strangers or sending email to friends.
9. Don't panic! No one can harm your child through the Internet as long as your child follows your rules.
10. Take an active interest in your child's activity online. Do NOT use the Internet as a babysitter! Learn to surf the Web and chat online yourself so you understand what it is that your child is doing. If you don't know how to chat online, ask your child to teach you!