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Generation Cyber: How to keep your family safe and secure online

At NCC Group we are passionate about shaping a more sustainable future for cyber security. Through our Generation Cyber campaign, we are focusing on ensuring that cyber security knowledge is accessible for all generations.

Today, Paul Vlissidis, Technical Director and Senior Adviser at NCC Group, takes us through his top tips for taking a proactive approach to staying safe online.

According to the **Digital 2020 Global Overview Report,** more than 4.5 billion people now use the internet worldwide. With nearly 60% of the globe's population already online, it's likely that you and your family are digitally

active in one way or another.

However, while social media, connected toys and video call applications can all bring joy to people's lives and help families to stay connected, it can also expose them to threats online. In fact, according to our [recent global survey of cyber awareness](#), 71% of you highlighted that there should be more regulation aimed at websites, apps and social media platforms to keep individuals and families safe online.

Encouragingly, most of you said that you had some measures in place to keep your household safe online. However, if you're still keen to take a proactive approach to doing so, here's five actions you can take now to help keep your family safe and secure online.

1.Use password managers

Firstly, encourage your family members to use password managers for all of their online accounts. These programs securely generate, store and manage unique passwords for all the websites you use, which reduces the risk of a hacker being able to access all of your accounts compared to if you were using one password across the board.

Conveniently, password managers also encrypt your passwords behind a master password, meaning that you only ever have to remember one at a time.

2.Apply two-factor authentication

If a hacker manages to steal a family member's password, two-factor authentication (2FA) can provide a useful second line of defence. When logging into services online, 2FA forces the user to prove that they are who they say they are by providing a password *and* an additional proof-point, such as a code sent by text message or generated by an app.

Many online services do not have 2FA set up automatically, so advise your relatives to apply it across all of their online accounts.

3.Check your connected devices

The number of connected devices in the home has increased in recent years, which can come with security risks. Whether it's a TV, a children's toy or a smart plug, read the product description carefully to find out how it connects to the internet and whether you are comfortable with the access it requires.

Many connected devices also arrive with default security settings out of the box, so set your own strong password for each product. Our survey showed that 78% of your keep phone apps updated, while 74% do the same for their device operating systems. This is encouraging, but you should regularly check that you've downloaded the latest security updates for *all* of the devices, apps and software packages that you use.

Normally, these can be found in the same place as where you purchased the item from such as an app store, but contact the product's manufacturer or developer if you're unsure.

4.Use an internet security package

Internet security suites are often viewed simply as antivirus packages. However, they can cover multiple devices, enabling you to protect your family's devices with one software suite. Many go beyond protection from malware to defend you against ransomware, and some even offer Virtual Private Networks (VPNs), which encrypts all users' internet traffic through a private 'tunnel' to enhance data security and privacy.

Some packages are free, so speak to relevant family members and shop around to decide on the suite that feels right to you.

5.Apply good email security

Finally, encourage your relatives to secure their email accounts. As with passwords, they should not use one address for all the services that they use. For example, discuss establishing a formal account to use with your energy provider, and another to use with your takeaway restaurant of choice.

As with passwords, this step will mitigate the risk of a hacker being able to access all of your accounts by compromising one email address. Again, you should also apply 2FA to your email accounts to further reduce the risk of being compromised.

What do I do if a family member gets hacked?

The steps outlined in this blog should only be considered as first steps when it comes to protecting your family online.

If a relative does fall victim to a cyber crime, encourage them to report it to the police and the internet provider or social media platform that they were using at the time. By understanding the threats online more clearly, these bodies and organisations will be better equipped to make the internet safer and more secure for your family in the future.

For more information on keeping your family safe online, visit the following resources:

UK: https://www.ncsc.gov.uk/section/information-for/individuals-families

US: https://www.cisa.gov/publication/stop-think-connect-toolkit

Europe: https://cybersecuritymonth.eu

Europe: https://cybersecuritymonth.eu/press-campaign-toolbox/resources-2019/enisa-infographic-en.pdf

Canada: https://www.getcybersafe.gc.ca/index-en.aspx

Australia: https://www.cyber.gov.au/acsc/individuals-and-families

Singapore: https://www.csa.gov.sg/gosafeonline

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About NCC Group

NCC Group exists to make the world safer and more secure.

As global experts in cyber security and risk mitigation, NCC Group is trusted

by over 15,000 clients worldwide to protect their most critical assets from the ever-changing threat landscape.

With the company's knowledge, experience and global footprint, it is best placed to help businesses identify, assess, mitigate and respond to the evolving cyber risks they face.

To support its mission, NCC Group continually invests in research and innovation, and is passionate about developing the next generation of cyber scientists.

With over 1,800 colleagues in 12 countries, NCC Group has a significant market presence in North America, continental Europe and the UK, and a rapidly growing footprint in Asia Pacific with offices in Australia and Singapore.

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