**Let’s Talk About Online Privacy**

Handout

# PROTECTING YOUR PERSONAL DATA

* **Provide only essential personal information online**
  + If you are asked for a birth date, address or other personal information, consider why and how it will be used.
  + Provide only what is necessary (a red asterisk \* will usually mark required information; leave all other fields blank).
  + Check the website’s authority (is it legitimate? Do they provide valid contact information) and their privacy policy before entering personal information.
* **Do not give out your passwords**, or if you must give your password to someone change it afterwards.
* **Delete accounts you no longer use**.
* **Be diligent when online shopping**
  + Use a secured network
  + Look for the lock symbol and the “s” after the http i.e. http**s**://) when transmitting personal information.



* + Always log out after you are finished using your account.
  + Use a pre-paid credit card, or a payment gateway, such as PayPal, that hides your card number.
    - Using PayPal is more secure than giving less known websites your credit card information.

# PROTECTING YOUR PRIVACY

* **Manage your software and computer**
  + Keep your software updated (this makes it as secure as possible)
  + Use trusted antivirus software
  + Check your software and computer privacy and security settings regularly
* **Use 2-step verification** as a second layer of protection to your accounts.
* **Manage your browser cookies** 
  + For Firefox click the three line menu icon in the top right of the browser window, select *Options* 🡪 *Privacy & Security* 🡪 Scroll down to *Cookies and Site Data* 🡪*Clear Data* or *Manage Data*.
* **Manage your browsing history**
  + For Firefox click the three line menu icon in the top right of the browser window, select *Options* 🡪 *Privacy & Security* 🡪 Scroll down to *History.*
  + Consider using a “private browsing window” if you do not want your history recorded.
    - Go to *File* (top left) and select *Open in New Private Window*
  + This only affects what is remembered by your browser. It does not prevent websites or search engines from tracking your online activity.
* **Use browser extensions** (also called add-ons) to increase privacy and security
  + Some recommended extensions are *Privacy Badger*, *disconnect.me*, *www.ghostery.com* and *https Everywhere.*

 

* + Consider the “Recommended” tag and search for online reviews when selecting browser extensions.
* **Use alternative search engines** that do not track your searching, such as *DuckDuckGo*.
* **Use browsers** that have strong security features, such as *Firefox.*

# CREATING STRONG PASSWORDS

* **Have a unique password for each account.** 
  + If someone discovers your password for one account, all of your other accounts will be vulnerable.
* **Use a longer password.** 
  + Your password should be at least 8 characters long, although for extra security it should be even longer.
* **Never use personal information** for a password
  + Don’t use your name, birthday, user name, or email address.
* **Make your password hard to guess**
  + Include numbers, symbols, and both uppercase and lowercase letters.
  + Avoid using words that can be found in the dictionary.
* **Random passwords are the strongest.** 
  + If you're having trouble creating one, use a free online password generator.
* **Use a password manager** to manage all your passwords to ensure secure passwords and reduce stress related to remembering passwords.
  + Some popular online password managers are *1Password*, *LastPass*, *KeepassX* and *Dashlane*.

# avoidING scams

* **Be aware of phishing emails** **and online ads** which are trying to trick you into sharing personal information with those with malicious intent
  + Go to accounts directly to log in and check for alerts (don’t click on a link in an email).
  + Never submit financial/personal information through a link sent to you.
  + Never call a phone number sent by email – contact the company directly.

# TRACKING VS IDENTIFY THEFT

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**ASSESSING THE SECURITY OF YOUR ACCOUNTS**

Write down all the accounts you remember, and check off how much security they have.

Note: *Many accounts have steps you can take if you no longer have the password (this usually involves sending you an email to the email they have on record).*

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| **Name of account**  (e.g. email; Apple ID; banking; etc.) | **Is this account still in use?**  If not, consider deleting it. | **Is the password secure?** (see pg. 2 of handout) | **If 2-step verification an option? If so, is it enabled?** | **Is my “Forgot my password question” one that people won’t easily guess?** |
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# LEARN MORE

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| **VPL Events Guide** | For days, times and locations, check out the “Computer & Technology” category in our Events Calendar. You can also look in the paper brochure “VPL Classes & Workshops”. | **www.vpl.ca/events** |
| **VPL Computer Practice Drop-In** | A drop-in to practice new skills with information staff assistance. | **Central Library**  **Tuesdays & Thursdays**  **2:00 - 3:00 pm** |
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| **DigitalLearn** | Online hub for digital literacy support and training. Great video-based modules with narration for basic digital skills learning. | **www.digitallearn.org** |
| **Electronic Frontier Foundation (EFF)** | Surveillance Self-Defense – a guide to help protect you from online tracking and surveillance. EFF is an independent non-profit working to protect online privacy. | **https://ssd.eff.org** |