A Teens Guide to Cyber Security; *Source: Hotspot Shield*

- Social networks provide us with the opportunity to say connected with our friends and loved ones at all times of the day and night and across long distances. There can, however, be a price to pay for spending so much time online. Security can be compromised, old posts can come back to haunt us, and we may be the target of harassment if we don't protect ourselves from cyberbullying. Teenagers are especially susceptible to these threats, as they tend to use social networks every day. If you're a teen and wondering how you can keep yourself safe on the Internet, know that a few changes in your habits can help you ensure a protected online life.

  Online Safety
  Practice Safe Social Networking
  Online Safety Guide

- Social networks can be a great place to connect with people, but they can also make teenagers vulnerable because of the information that is typically shared on them. Many social networks have privacy settings that will help you control who can access your profile and information and who can interact with you. Turn off any location services that social media sites offer to protect your whereabouts. Create strong passwords comprised of random letters and numbers, update apps when new versions become available, keep your online circle of friends limited to people you trust, and use the block feature or report bullying as soon as you experience harassment. Some platforms, like Snapchat, may seem like safe places to share because messages can disappear after a set amount of time, but people can still take screenshots, capturing messages and posts even when they're intended to disappear from the site.

  Social Networks
  How to Create a Strong Password for Your Social Media Accounts
  Ten Safe Social Networking Sites for Teens

- Messenger apps like Kik can introduce teens to other like-minded individuals within seconds. Conversations can start and friendships can easily begin, but the same safety procedures should be followed when using messenger apps as when communicating online. Security can depend on creating a random user name that is not similar to your real name and avoiding sharing details about yourself that are too personal. Avoid sharing information such as your location and age.

  What Are Some Good Rules for Screen Names and Passwords?
  Chat Room Safety
  Safety Tips for Using Chat Rooms
  Stop, Think, Connect: An Online Safety Quiz (PDF)

- Sexting is a growing problem among teenagers, with many young people feeling pressure to share sexually explicit images with friends or strangers every day. Consider downloading and using apps that will help you combat online sexual advances. The Send This Instead app, for example, can help you fend off peers who pressure you to send sexually explicit messages. The National Center for Missing and Exploited Children has a tipline you can call in case you come across someone on the Internet who sends you explicit material or attempts to take advantage of you. Remember that reporting instances of this type of sexual harassment could save the life of a child even younger than you, so don't hesitate to file a report as soon as an incident occurs.

  What Is Sexting?
  Sexting and the Consequences
  CyberTipline

- Since everything that you do online can be seen later by your parents, friends, and even future employers, it's important to stay on top of how you come across on social media. You can protect

your reputation and keep your digital footprint clean by regularly looking over your online profiles, running Internet searches to see which websites have archived information about you, and checking your privacy settings. If you find that your Internet past includes embarrassing or potentially harmful content, delete or deactivate profiles and change your Internet habits; remember that you can help clean up your digital footprint by simply thinking about what you're posting online. Security can depend on keeping your profile generic, with as little personal information on it as possible, and avoiding sharing anything that you wouldn't want everybody to see.

> Digital Reputation
> The Importance of Your Digital Reputation
> What Are Digital Footprints?
> Online Reputation Checklist (PDF)

- Unfortunately, the anonymous and consequence-free environment that the Internet offers can encourage people to engage in harassment and bullying. To keep your online space peaceful, resist posting any photos that could be interpreted as sexual. Don't share profiles or give your passwords to others, and log out of public computers to reduce the chances that someone will use your profile to post things without your consent. If you find yourself a victim of cyberbullying, don't engage with your attackers, as it could make the situation worse; instead, keep records of any messages, texts, or emails that you've received from cyberbullies and report the activity to site administrators. Reach out to parents and other trusted adults, like teachers, for help and support if the harassment gets worse and laws are being broken.

> Safer Internet Day
> Cyberbullying and Online Predators Tip Sheet
> Invasion of the Wireless Hackers Game
> Stop That Post Game
> Safe Online Surfing Game