

# 21 HOME COMPUTER TIPS FOR STAYING SAFE ONLINE

1. Don't run Windows XP. Use Windows 7, 10, or Mac OSX.
2. Do your Windows or OSX Updates. Don't wait to apply these critical security patches!
3. Your smartphone is a hand-held computer make sure to apply those patches too.
4. Update Java, Adobe Flash and Silverlight regularly. Set them to automatically update if you can. These programs are notoriously hacked.
5. When you download and install software from the Internet, avoid installing extras like Google Tool Bar. Some software will try to sneak these in on you. Uncheck these if you see them.
6. Run only one Anti-Virus Program. Pay to keep it updated if you have to and update it regularly. We don't have a preference. Don't trust anti-virus exclusively. Safe surfing habits are the best way to prevent infection. The best anti-virus is the one you use and keep updated.
7. When you download a program or file from the Internet scan it with your anti-virus before you open it. Often this is a simple right-click action to perform.
8. Download and install **CCleaner** free version. It cleans a lot of unwanted junk off your computer. Only get it from [www.piriform.com](http://www.piriform.com). Run the cleaner once a week.
9. Download and install **MalwareBytes** free version. It is a good anti-malware detector. IT has to be updated before you use it the first time. Only get it from [www.malwarebytes.org](http://www.malwarebytes.org) Keep it updated and run it once a week.
10. **VirusTotal** at <https://www.virustotal.com> is a great place to check files and links for viruses.
11. Use the **Firefox** web browser [www.mozilla.org](http://www.mozilla.org). It is a great independent browser and the organization is big on privacy. Keep any browser you use up to date.
12. Firefox's greatest feature is the many plugins that you can install to enhance its security. If you feel comfortable with adding plugins, we like **Ghostery, NoScript, Adblock, UBlock, and HTTPs Everywhere**. These can go a long way to protect your privacy online but remember, the more security you add to your browser the less beautiful your online experience will be. This is why many people just choose to ignore security.
13. For the more adventurous users look into sandbox programs like **Sandboxie**. Only download from [www.sandboxie.com](http://www.sandboxie.com)
14. Your children are a big security threat to your computers. They want to play online java based games like Minecraft. Minecraft is a great game and it is truly educational but resist adding mods to it or any games unless you are experienced. Many mod sites are bad!
15. Teach your children online safety. Not just from hackers but also child predators. [www.netsmartz.com](http://www.netsmartz.com) is a great site for kids to learn about online security. Also, <https://staysafeonline.org> is a great source.
16. Enable appropriate parental controls on your TVs, Netflix accounts etc.
17. You can get a free internet filter for your home at <https://www.opendns.com/home-internet-security/>
18. Teach your kids about phishing. They are often phished in chat rooms or through social media.
19. Do not jailbreak your smart phones or side load third party apps. This can make your device vulnerable to hackers.
20. Get a personal VPN <https://www.expressvpn.com>. A personal VPN can keep your internet surfing from being snooped on by your internet service provider and sold to marketing companies.
21. Use a password manager like 1Password and use multi factor authentication.

