Ways to Guard Your Privacy Online

Overview
You and your information are everywhere. When you’re online you leave a trail of “digital exhaust” in the form of Web browser cookies, GPS data, social network posts, and e-mail exchanges, among others. It is critical to learn how to protect yourself and guard your privacy. Your identity and even your bank account could be at risk!

Use long and complex passwords or passphrases
These are often the first line of defense in protecting an online account. The length and complexity of your passwords can provide an extra level of protection for your personal information.

Take care what you share
Periodically check the privacy settings for your social networking apps to ensure that they are set to share only what you want, with whom you intend. Be very careful about putting personal information online. What goes on the Internet — usually stays on the Internet. Do a billboard test before you publicly post: Information can’t be unseen. Be discreet and share with care.

Go stealth when browsing
Your browser can store quite a bit of information about your online activities, including tracking cookies, cached pages, and history. To ensure the privacy of personal information online, limit access by going “incognito” and using the browser’s private mode. Also, consider disabling geotagging and geolocation features on mobile devices.

Using WiFi?
If only public Wi-Fi is available, restrict your activity to simple searches (no banking!) or use a VPN (virtual private network). The latter provides an encrypted tunnel between you and the sites you visit.

Should you trust that app?
Only use apps from reputable sources. Check out reviews from users or other trusted sources before downloading anything that is unfamiliar.

*CYBER SECURITY AWARENESS: “OUR SHARED RESPONSIBILITY”*

The information provided in the monthly newsletter is intended to increase the security awareness of our organization’s end users and to help them behave in a more secure manner within their work environment. While some of the tips may relate to maintaining a home computer, the increased awareness is intended to help improve the organization’s overall information security posture. Mason’s IT Security Office brings you these tips produced by Educause Review.