



West Virginia Executive Branch
Privacy Tip



National Cybersecurity Awareness Month

The line between our online and offline lives is indistinguishable. In these tech-fueled times, our homes, societal well-being, economic prosperity and nation's security are impacted by the internet.

The 15th annual National Cybersecurity Awareness Month (NCSAM) will highlight user awareness among consumers, students/academia and business. NCSAM 2018 will address specific challenges and identify opportunities for behavioral change. It will also remind everyone that protecting the internet is "Our Shared Responsibility." In addition, NCSAM 2018 will shine a spotlight on the critical need to build a strong, cyber secure workforce to help ensure families, communities, businesses and the country's infrastructure are better protected.

Week 1: Oct. 1–5: Make Your Home a Haven for Online Safety

Every day, parents and caregivers teach kids basic safety practices – like looking both ways before crossing the street and holding an adult's hand in a crowded place. Easy-to-learn life lessons for online safety and privacy begin with parents leading the way. Learning good cybersecurity practices can also help set a strong foundation for a career in the industry. With family members using the internet to engage in social media, adjust the home thermostat or shop for the latest connected toy, it is vital to make certain that the entire household – including children – learn to use the internet safely and responsibly and that networks and mobile devices are secure. Week 1 will underscore basic cybersecurity essentials the entire family can deploy to protect their homes against cyber threats.

At every age and for every user in a household, the privacy and security pitfalls can change. That's why it's essential to remain in the know about the kinds of cybersecurity issues that different people may face:

1. Young children – For most youngsters, it may be up to Mom and Dad to enter their information into an age-appropriate account, so it's also up to the parents to understand what information they're sharing, what permissions they're granting, and where that information can end up. Understanding what kinds of data breaches have taken place in the past can also help, such as [the VTech breach](#) or ones involving public schools and doctors' offices.
2. Preteens and Tweens – Every generation has thought that kids were growing up too fast these days, but when it comes to technology—especially unsupervised access to it—that may be truer now more than ever before. The [average age for US kids](#) to get their first smartphone is now ten years old, and that can mean unprecedented access to the internet, downloadable apps, social media, and more.
3. Teens and Young Adults – One of the most commonly associated cybersecurity issues for young adults is probably cyberbullying, especially on social media, but that's just one of the many dangers this age group can face. While it's important to discuss proper behavior online as well as what to do if they're targeted, it's also vital that parents discuss scams, fraud, identity theft, hoaxes, and more. One staggering statistic, for example, has shown that senior citizens may be more likely to be targeted by a scammer, but Millennials are the ones who [lose more money to online scams](#) and fraud.

No matter what age your family members may be, NCSAM is an excellent time to explore your privacy, security, and overall digital safety.

Contact the Identity Theft Resource Center for toll-free, no-cost assistance at (888) 400-5530. For on-the-go assistance, check out the [free ID Theft Help App](#) from ITRC.