INVESTIGATOR INSIGHT

Could how you use the internet effect the security of your personal identity?

A review of good and bad habits for internet use

Kroll's Investigators have counseled hundreds of thousands about identity theft over the years. Such depth of counseling experience provides great insight into various aspects of the issue. One of which is the fact that, occasionally, consumers are a stumbling block unto themselves when it comes to keeping their identity secure.

Here we share the good habits and bad habits people tend to employ while using the internet and how the bad habits may endanger the security of their personal identifying information:

Lacking a working knowledge of the device they use to access the internet. For example, if given a specific web address to visit, type it into the browser's address bar instead of using a search engine to find it. When using a search engine for a **specific address**, you risk choosing a search result that takes you to a different location than what you wanted.

Take time to learn how to use your device and the software applications on that device. Learn what each feature and software application does and how to use them securely.

Leaving websites "open," meaning they stay logged in to the sites they visit. Therefore, anyone who accesses your device can gain entry into any account open on the device.

Always log out of each online account you visit.

Allowing the website they visit to remember passwords to their accounts. If the device is lost or stolen, someone could visit gain access to your online accounts.

Do not allow your passwords to be "remembered" by the website.

Being unfamiliar with online advertisements. Some ads for services appear to be from your device's operating system but are not.

Before responding to any advertisement, be sure to understand what it is offering and who is providing the product/service. Research your device and software applications to know what an update notice from each looks like and respond only to legitimate notices.

Failing to understand that just because something is on the internet, does not make it legitimate.

Review unsolicitated email, pop-up boxes, employment offers, announcements of lotteries won, and sites where you buy/sell items with a critical eye. There are many who prey on internet users who are desparate, anxious, greedy, etc., and may react too fast to an offer or be too quick to follow a direction.