



## Safe Surfing for Adults



Leicestershire CareOnLine  
Room 317, County Hall, Leicestershire County Council  
Phone: 0116 305 7538.  
Email: [leicestershirecareonline@leics.gov.uk](mailto:leicestershirecareonline@leics.gov.uk)  
Website: <http://www.leicscareonline.org.uk>

# Introduction

The internet is a wonderful resource. It can provide information and advice, help you find support, give you shopping opportunities or let you communicate with other people. But the Internet can also be a hazardous place, if you don't know the risks and how to deal with them.

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# Your Physical Health

'Are you sitting comfortably? Then I'll begin!'

## Setting up the Computer

Before you begin, you need to think about where to put the computer. Whether you use a standard "desktop" or a laptop it is best to place it on a desk or table with the screen at a comfortable height for viewing and where you can position a chair with room for your legs and feet. If you place it near a window make sure the light will not be too bright, especially in summer; sitting with the light behind you and good blinds or curtains is often best.



Remember that computers come with a range of other equipment such as printers, scanners and webcams, which come with many wires. You will need easy access to power and a number of power sockets.

- Do not overload sockets with too many devices or extensions
- Keep cables well away from where people walk.
- Make sure you have enough room for the equipment and that it does not extend into any areas where people are used to walking or block exits.
- Remember that other people may use the area; in the dark or in an emergency you may not remember that there is something new in the room; this is most important for people with sight problems and other disabilities.
- If your computer is a laptop then it may have wireless connections which will give you more flexibility.

## Sitting at the Computer

Before using your computer, make sure you are sitting comfortably and not straining your back, eyes, hands and feet. You will notice the difference if you sit at your computer for a long time.



It is very different from watching TV so you will need to ensure that the screen is at eye-level and a comfortable distance for your vision. The size and colour of the print on the screen can be adjusted to suit your needs; there are many options available and CareOnLine can provide advice (contact details on front page).

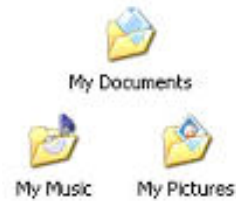
Some glasses such as bi-focals and vari-focals may not be ideal for comfortable long term use of a computer screen, whereas they are suitable for a combination of watching TV and reading.

The chair you use is also important as armchairs are not high enough nor do they provide the right kind of back support; a dining chair or office chair will be more suitable; chairs on castors may be unsuitable for people with walking and mobility problems. You should think about this when planning where to put the computer. CareOnLine can provide advice on suitable furniture and computer setup.

When using the computer take regular breaks and move around; this will help to prevent eye strain and some of the aches and pains associated with sitting in one position for too long.

## Housekeeping

- Keep your document folders and email boxes up to date and tidy.
- Delete any unnecessary items, especially emails with large documents attached such as photographs.
- Back-up your computer data on disks or CDs regularly.
- Keep a copy of your work on a floppy disk or CD so that you will not lose important information if anything goes wrong with your computer. Many people make weekly backups of all their important data.
- Make sure you know where your original software disks are in case your computer system files get damaged.
- Do not load someone else's software on your machine; it may be illegal to copy software for which you have not bought a licence and there is the chance that it may corrupt your machine.



## Telephone Charge Rates

Avoid Premium Rate numbers. UK based Premium Rate numbers usually begin with 090 and cost from 10p to £5 or more per minute. They are usually found on sites advertising services which are best avoided but can be used for some legitimate services such as:

- Competitions, free or cheap holiday offers / timeshares
- Technical Computer Support
- Information Services e.g. weather

You may want to use these services or find it necessary (e.g. technical computer support). If you have to use them ask how much it is costing at the start of the call or ask the company if they can call you back.

Some telephone service providers such as BT can block access to premium rate numbers.

### Premium Rate numbers you should avoid

One way in which your computer can be connected to these numbers is if you have closed or clicked on a 'pop up' advert incorrectly (see page 10). These sites can disconnect you from your usual Internet Service Provider and reconnect to another line - usually an international or premium rate number. This can happen without your knowledge and can stay connected at the expensive rate for long periods of time. This number may be remembered by your computer and dialled whenever you connect to the Internet, resulting in high telephone bills which you may have difficulty in objecting to. This is why it is important to regularly check that your dial-up number is correct. You can do this by going to: Start → Control Panel → Network Connections → (right click on your connection) → Properties  
Broadband connects to the internet differently to dial-up connections, you have more protection with a broadband connection.

### Action Checklist

- When in doubt close unwanted 'pop up' windows - never click 'OK'
- Always read carefully any Internet messages that offer downloads
- Consider installing a premium rate call barring mechanism - contact your telephone supplier for details e.g. if you have a BT line you can find details at [www.bt.com/btprivacyonline](http://www.bt.com/btprivacyonline)

Check that you only have one internet connection number set up.

# Virus Protection

Computer viruses can cause many problems if left untreated. Your data could be corrupted or deleted, your personal information could be sent to the virus's creator, or your computer may start to behave in unusual or annoying ways.



Viruses can be avoided. Always have an up-to-date virus checking package installed on your computer, which will monitor all information received from the Internet.

Some are free to download from the Internet and others come together with firewall and parental control in a package and will charge an annual fee. Main suppliers include Norton and McAfee. Some Internet Service Providers such as BT and Virgin Media offer protection software.

## Free Virus Checker

There are hundreds of free virus checkers on the Internet, but CareOnLine use AVG, available to download from [www.grisoft.com](http://www.grisoft.com). From their homepage, go to "Free Basic Protection - AVG Anti-Virus Free Edition" on the left of the screen.

You can learn more about protecting your computer from viruses on these websites:

- ◆ [www.itsafe.gov.uk](http://www.itsafe.gov.uk)
- ◆ [www.getnetwise.org](http://www.getnetwise.org)

# Firewalls

A firewall prevents outside users from connecting to your computer and obtaining personal information without your permission.

A firewall will keep track of all communications from and to your computer, and it prevents unsolicited traffic from reaching your computer. For example, if you have a wireless connection, a firewall will warn you if someone else is attempting to use your connection. If you have a Broadband connection you are strongly advised to install a firewall immediately.

If you run Windows XP or Vista, there is a firewall included in the operating system. You can change the settings by going to the Security Centre from the Control Panel.


Many Virus Protection programs also include a Firewall; others can be downloaded for free from the Internet.

You can learn more about protecting your computer from these threats:

- ◆ [www.firewallguide.com](http://www.firewallguide.com)

## Websites to Avoid

The Internet contains a vast amount of information. Whilst most of this is useful, there is some which is illegal and some which can be offensive.

Some of these sites will 'pop up' on your screen when you are connected to the Internet. Always close these windows completely using the Close box in the top right corner of the screen.  Do not click 'OK' or any links inside the window. If you visited the website thinking it was about something else, then use your browsers 'Back' button to return to the previous page.

Some examples of information considered unsuitable are:

- Pornography/Adult Content/Sex
- Illegal Drugs
- Racist or hate news media
- Sites deemed 'tasteless' i.e. offensive
- Sites promoting or containing violence.

If you reach one of these sites by accident, do not worry, just close the window or use the browsers 'Back' button.

If you want to report a website with illegal content, visit the Internet Watch Foundation: [www.iwf.org.uk](http://www.iwf.org.uk)

You can learn more about protecting your computer from these websites:

- ◆ [www.getsafeonline.org](http://www.getsafeonline.org)
- ◆ [www.getnetwise.org](http://www.getnetwise.org)

# Annoying Adverts, Popups and Spyware

'Popups' are a form of online advertising that open unexpectedly on your screen. Examples of popups include adverts for casinos, holidays, competition wins and surveys. It is best to close these windows immediately without answering the questions or clicking anywhere inside the advert.



If you are troubled by popups, you can get free software called a 'Pop up stopper' or 'blocker' to restrict most of these adverts. Unfortunately, some popups will always get through the net, and blocking popups can prevent some websites from working correctly.

'Spyware' is computer software that gathers and reports information about a computer user without the user's knowledge or consent e.g. it can track a user's downloads, web surfing habits, logins and passwords. Spyware is unwittingly installed when you install something else.

A good firewall and virus checking package will help to prevent spyware.

You can learn more about protecting your computer from these problems:

- ◆ [www.itsafe.gov.uk](http://www.itsafe.gov.uk)
- ◆ [www.getnetwise.org](http://www.getnetwise.org)
- ◆ [www.spywareremoversreview.com](http://www.spywareremoversreview.com)

## Unwanted Email and Spam

Unwanted and unsolicited emails are also called 'Spam' emails. Examples include false charitable appeals, fake lottery wins, and banks requesting you contact them, pharmaceutical companies offering cheap medicines, upsetting or obscene content.



Never reply to an email like this and never open attachments to junk mail messages as they can contain viruses. You should delete any emails like this straight away - if it looks suspicious then get rid of it.

It will be helpful to set up a spam filter to get rid of a lot of these emails. These filters are not fool-proof and can delete genuine messages so it is advisable to look at the list of junk mail (which is usually diverted to a separate folder) before it is deleted to see if there are messages from anyone you know.

If you are using Microsoft Outlook it is possible to set up the junk mail box to automatically delete the contents at regular intervals. Some Internet Service Providers will provide you with their own protection software.

Online email servers like Hotmail, Gmail and Yahoo usually have built in Spam protection but again, they are not fool-proof and it is worth checking any Spam or Junk mail folders regularly.

You can learn more about protecting your computer from:

- ◆ [www.itsafe.gov.uk](http://www.itsafe.gov.uk)
- ◆ [www.getnetwise.org](http://www.getnetwise.org)

## Email Scams, Spoofs and Phishing

Some people have lost money through spam emails that contain bogus offers and fraudulent promotions. If you use email beware of messages which appear to be from genuine organisations asking you to confirm your account details.

Email scams and spoofs are sometimes featured on programmes such as BBC's Watchdog. You can sometimes tell that these are false messages as the standard of English used in them is poor. They may also offer you a prize or ask you to donate money. Standard advice applies to all offers received by email; "If it sounds too good to be true then it's probably a con".

'Phishing' is an email or pop-up message that claims to be from a business or organisation you may deal with, for example, an internet service provider, High Street Banks or online payment service. The message may ask you to 'update', 'validate', or 'confirm' your account information. It will have the Bank's logo and an apparently genuine web address.

### Helpful Tips

- A genuine bank will NEVER ask you to confirm your details or ask for your cash machine PIN number.
- If something is offered free or unusually cheap, be sceptical - you rarely get something for nothing.
- If an email or website looks suspicious, try ringing the company first.

## Passwords and Personal Information

Do not disclose any password or login information to anyone; the only exceptions would be your carer or other person who may use the website on your behalf.

Try to make it difficult for other people to guess your password by putting numbers and letters in. You might not be able to memorise your details so write them down and keep them in a safe place so only you or your carer (if applicable) know where it is.

Never give details of your bank accounts to people who telephone or email you. Banks will never ask for this information - they already have it.

There are some emails which pretend to be from your bank, asking you to confirm your details on their website; these are not genuine and should be deleted. Do not give your personal information, address, telephone credit cards details, to anyone over the internet unless you are sure that you are on a secured website such as online banking, shopping, purchasing goods etc. usually indicated by a padlock displayed in the bottom of the browser window or by the address bar:



If you are unsure if a particular website is secure, check if there is a telephone number (not a mobile number) that you can ring for further advice before registering online.

If you are using a public access computer (e.g. a computer in a library or day centre) make sure you logout of every website you enter your details or login to. Otherwise other people may be able to access your information.

## Online Banking and Shopping

Using your credit or debit card online can be just as safe as using it in shops, and sometimes a lot more convenient!



It is best to stay with names you know and trust or those recommended by others. Examples are: Tesco, Amazon, Marks & Spencer or Wilkinson's. All these sites will have secure online shopping facilities which will not allow your details to be disclosed or accessed by anyone else. Never put your card details into a page that is not secure i.e. if you can't see the padlock then do not give your details.



Most reputable companies will provide secure online purchasing as they rely on it for a part of their business. You will also have certain protected rights when using most UK credit cards.

If you enter your details or login to a public access computer (e.g. a computer in a library or day centre) make sure you logout after you finish. Otherwise other people may still be able to access your information or account.

## Delivery and Returns of Goods

Most companies will use courier services to deliver their goods except where they are small enough for normal post (such as CD's). You will need to be at home to sign for the goods; some couriers will only try twice after which you will have a limited amount of time to collect the goods from their depot before they are returned. It is best to check the delivery details before ordering anything online.

## Top 10 hints for safe online shopping

- All of your usual shopping rights apply online: you can find these in the CareOnLine 'Online Shopping' section or see [www.consumerdirect.gov.uk](http://www.consumerdirect.gov.uk)
- Know who you're dealing with: get the seller's landline phone number and postal address
- Be aware of terms and conditions: check payment and delivery details
- Keep records of what you order e.g. print a copy of the sellers order form
- EU Law protects you against fraudulent use of your payment card in EU transactions: credit cards give you extra protection
- Only give your payment card details over a secure connection, and never by email: never disclose your PIN number to anyone, and never send it over the internet to anyone else
- You usually have at least 7 days to cancel an order and request a refund from an EU retailer
- Check your payment card statement carefully: you have at least 90 days to report a suspect transaction
- When you buy goods online from outside the EU:
  - you are classed as an importer and may be liable to pay any Customs Duty and VAT
  - be cautious as it may be difficult if problems arise
- If you have a problem, contact the seller then, if you need to, the payment company, or local Trading Standards Office  
[www.leics.gov.uk/trading-standards](http://www.leics.gov.uk/trading-standards)

## Communicating with Others Online

One of the best things about the Internet is the ability to keep in touch with friends and family and also make new friends. You can get help and advice, support, submit applications, or just share a laugh between friends.

There are many ways of communicating with people online including; emails, chatrooms, instant messenger, message boards, forums, personal web pages and social networking websites. Chatrooms, message boards and forums can be great fun and you can meet really interesting people.

**Don't be scared of using them, just be cautious.**

There are a few useful tips to remember when communicating with others online:

- If you are communicating with someone in a chatroom or a message board, then don't give out your personal information (like full name, email addresses, date of birth or home address). If you don't want the world to know it, then don't write it!
- You can never really be sure who you are speaking to in chatrooms and message boards - remember, anyone can call themselves anything.

(See the next page for a local, safe chatroom.)



# The Grapevine

The Grapevine is like a 'Chatroom', where issues, experiences, information and advice can be discussed in an online environment.



There are many conversations and topics to join in with; news and sports, entertainment, living with a disability, getting older, caring for others, money and benefits, health and social care, housing and the environment, community information, work and learning and computing and technology.

Messages posted to the chatroom can be read without registering any details, but you must register to post a message yourself. All you need to register is a valid email address.

**The Grapevine is available to use now:**

[www.leicscareonline.org.uk/mim\\_forums\\_homepage.htm](http://www.leicscareonline.org.uk/mim_forums_homepage.htm)

The Grapevine is maintained and monitored by Leicestershire CareOnLine [www.leicscareonline.org.uk](http://www.leicscareonline.org.uk). Our staff members check the messages in The Grapevine daily to ensure that it stays a safe and comfortable environment that everyone can enjoy.

If you have any questions or require any help using The Grapevine, please email [grapevine@leics.gov.uk](mailto:grapevine@leics.gov.uk) or call 0116 305 7538

## File Sharing and Downloading

The Internet is a fantastic resource and you may find things that you want to download to your computer.

When you download something, your virus protection should warn you if there is a problem with the file, but some viruses slip through the net, so always scan any new files before opening them on your computer.

There are lots of websites that seem to offer free music, videos or software, but beware; you rarely get something for nothing and it could lead to more trouble!

Although file sharing is a legal technology with legal uses, many people use it to download and share copyrighted materials without permission, such as MP3 music hits and blockbuster movies. The police, the media and related authorities are aware of this and are clamping down on illegal file sharing. One method they are using is to monitor the downloads from well-known sites that are breaking the law. In some instances, individual downloaders have been sued for illegally downloading files from sites such as Kazaa, Napster, BitTorrent, Lime Wire and Morpheus.

During 2008, the UK government tried to bring in laws that would allow illegal downloaders to be banned from using an Internet connection altogether as well as imposing criminal charges against them.

If you are in doubt, do not download the file. Better to be safe than sorry!

For more general advice see the following website:

- ◆ [www.pro-music.org/](http://www.pro-music.org/)

## Controlling Access for Adults and Children



If you allow family, friends or especially children to access the Internet through your computer you need to be aware of possible dangers.

Surfing the Internet from the comfort of home can give a false sense of security. Adults and children who are new to computers or unaware of the dangers can give away personal details such as where they live or go to school.

In contacting people over the Internet, it is easy to inadvertently reveal your email addresses, which increases the risk of receiving unwanted emails.

You may want to consider installing a Content Filter, also known as Parental Controls. This is a piece of software that can stop access to offensive or undesired internet content e.g. sexual activity, swearing, violence etc. can all be blocked. Most full Virus Protection will have some Parental Control options, but free Virus Protection will not.

For more details and general advice see the following websites:

- ◆ [www.thinkuknow.co.uk](http://www.thinkuknow.co.uk)
- ◆ [www.getnetwise.org/](http://www.getnetwise.org/)

## **Internet Laws and Regulations**

Many of the laws that exist for written media (books, journals etc.) also apply to websites.

### **Copyright Law -**

The online law of copyright is the same as the offline law. If you find an image, photo, sound file or piece of text that you want to copy and use, then you need to check the copyright information.

### **Data Protection Act -**

The Data Protection Act gives people the right to know what information is held about them and how it is used. Any website that allows you to register will be governed by the Data Protection Act, it will also state somewhere on the website how your information will be used - this is usually found in a 'Privacy Policy' or under the website's terms and conditions.

### **Libel and Law of Defamation -**

This law is all about reputation, and the protection of reputation and it protects both individuals and companies. It states that you should be protected if someone publishes information about you that is untrue or harmful. It also protects companies from anything that you may publish about them. This is the same law that newspapers must adhere to.

### **E-commerce Law and Consumer Protection Regulations -**

The E-commerce Law (Electronic Commerce) and Consumer Protection Regulation relates to websites that sell goods or services online. The law is intended to protect you from rogue traders and fraudulent websites.

## CareOnLine Support and Training

If you require further help with training and support, there are a range of organisations within Leicestershire and Leicester who can help.

For a list go to [www.leicscareonline.org.uk](http://www.leicscareonline.org.uk)

- ➔ Computers
- ➔ Computer & Internet Training

Leicestershire CareOnLine  
Room 317, County Hall  
Glenfield  
Leicester  
LE3 8RL

Telephone: 0116 305 7538  
Fax: 0116 305 8179

Email: [leicestershirecareonline@leics.gov.uk](mailto:leicestershirecareonline@leics.gov.uk)  
Website: [www.leicscareonline.org.uk](http://www.leicscareonline.org.uk)

## Glossary of Useful Terms

**Broadband**—A high-speed internet connection

**Browser**—Software that allows you to navigate the Internet

**Computer Virus**—A program that causes damage to your computer

**Corrupted Files**—A file that has been damaged or can't be opened

**Dialup**—A slower internet connection

**Download**—Copying a file from the internet to your computer

**E-commerce**—The sale of goods or services over the Internet

**Firewall**—A program that protects you from external attacks

**Hacker**—A computer programmer who creates malicious programs to exploit other computer users.

**Hardware**—Physical bits of a computer e.g. monitor, mouse

**Hyperlink**—A clickable link text or graphics on a page that takes you to another place

**ISP**—Internet Service Provider e.g. BT, Tiscali, NTL, TalkTalk, O2

**Landline**—Your home telephone

**Operating System**—Software controlling the overall operation of a computer e.g. Microsoft Windows, Apple Mac

**Parental Controls**—A website content filter that allow you to monitor or limit what can be seen or done on the internet

**Phishing**—Internet or email fraud that tricks you into revealing information about yourself

**Popups**—Small windows that open up on the screen, often displaying ads

**Trojan**—A damaging computer virus

**Search Engine**—A way of finding information on the internet

**Software**—The programs that run on a computer e.g. Microsoft Office

**Spam**—Junk email, usually unsolicited

**Spyware**—Software that gathers information about a user while they surf the Internet

**Spoof Emails**—Emails that appears to be genuine but are fake.

**Surfing**—Browsing through different pages and websites

**URL**—An internet web address e.g. www.bbc.co.uk

**Virus Protection**—Software that blocks the spread of viruses

**Wizard**—A feature that guides you through processes step-by-step

**Worm**—A damaging computer virus

## Useful Websites

Leicestershire CareOnLine: [www.leicscareonline.org.uk](http://www.leicscareonline.org.uk)

The Grapevine Chatroom:

[www.leicscareonline.org.uk/mim\\_forums\\_homepage](http://www.leicscareonline.org.uk/mim_forums_homepage)

BT Customers - Privacy: [www.bt.com/btprivacyonline](http://www.bt.com/btprivacyonline)

Copyright Info: [www.ipo.gov.uk/copy](http://www.ipo.gov.uk/copy)

Consumer Direct: [www.consumerdirect.gov.uk](http://www.consumerdirect.gov.uk)

Data Protection: [www.ico.gov.uk](http://www.ico.gov.uk)

Direct Gov: [www.direct.gov.uk](http://www.direct.gov.uk)

Firewall Guides: [www.firewallguide.com](http://www.firewallguide.com)

Free Virus Protection Software: [www.grisoft.com](http://www.grisoft.com)

Get Safe Online: [www.getsafeonline.org](http://www.getsafeonline.org)

Get Net Wise: [www.getnetwise.org/](http://www.getnetwise.org/)

Internet Watch Foundation: [www.iwf.org.uk/](http://www.iwf.org.uk/)

IT Safe: [www.itsafe.gov.uk](http://www.itsafe.gov.uk)

Leicestershire Trading Standards: [www.leics.gov.uk/trading-standards](http://www.leics.gov.uk/trading-standards)

Pro Music: [www.pro-music.org/](http://www.pro-music.org/)

Rip Off Tip Off: [www.ripofftipoff.net](http://www.ripofftipoff.net)

Spyware Reviews: [www.spywareremoversreview.com](http://www.spywareremoversreview.com)

Think You Know? [www.thinkuknow.co.uk](http://www.thinkuknow.co.uk)

# Your Notes

If you would like this booklet in another language or format, please contact us using the contact details on the front page.

Disclaimer: Inclusion of any company or website does not imply a recommendation. Website addresses are liable to change without notice.

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