

TIP OF THE MONTH JANUARY 2010

WHY WORRY ABOUT MY PRIVACY?

The Data Protection (Privacy of Personal Information) Act 2003 (the DPA) was enacted to protect the privacy of personal information of individuals in The Bahamas.

If you are a frequent user of the Internet you would know that viruses, spam, worms, trojan horse, spyware, adware, keyboggers, zombies, phishing schemes are all tools crooks use to steal your information or your money and/or create havoc as a source of entertainment. Oftentimes it seems that danger is always lurking on the internet, in your email box, and maybe even on your computer. But are you and your personal information really at risk? Are the consequences really that bad?

Don't take chances with your personal information; follow these simple steps to protect your privacy:

Choose good passwords and keep them safe

Your password is more than just a key to your online account. If your password falls into the wrong hands, someone can easily impersonate you online, sign your name to online service agreements or contracts, buy merchandise with your credit card, or lock you out of your account. Choose a password that would be difficult for anyone else to guess and treat it as personal, confidential information.

Don't take the bait from phishing scams:

Fraudsters send fake emails or set up fake websites that mimic sign-in pages (or the sign-in pages of other trusted companies, such as eBay or PayPal) to trick you into disclosing your user and password. This practice is sometimes referred to as "phishing" - a play on the word "fishing" - because the fraudster is fishing for your private account information.

Be careful when giving out personal information

Be cautious about giving out your credit card numbers, National Insurance Board Number, bank account numbers, driver's license number, and passwords. Never include this information in an email, which is generally not secure. Be suspicious of any company that asks for this information in an email or instant message. Most legitimate companies will never ask you to confirm sensitive data in an online form or in an email, and will instead use conventional mail when requesting this information.

Don't fall for spam tricks

Spam – also called junk or unsolicited mail – is more than just annoying. It can separate you from your money, and lead to more and more spam in your inbox. To protect yourself and your privacy, never respond to unsolicited email. Don't follow a spam email's instructions to reply with the word "remove" or "unsubscribe" in the subject line or body of the message unless you trust the source. Never click on a link or web address in a spam email, even if the email tells you

that's how to unsubscribe. Don't sign up with sites that promise to remove your name from spam lists.

Keep your account information current

Make sure your account is updated with your current contact information. If you are the victim of a phishing scam for your account password, you'll need to verify your account information to regain access and ensure a speedy recovery.

Care with new on-line friends

Remember new "on-line friends" may not have so friendly intentions! Guard your personal information at all times; treat it the way you treat your cash!

For more information on the above and any other data protection subject you may E-mail us at dataprotection@bahamas.gov.bs