

## Introduction

The Internet is a wonderful tool that can make your life better in many ways. Unfortunately the features that make it easy for honest people to use can also be exploited by mischief-makers and even criminals.

But you should not let fear stop you using the Internet.

A few simple precautions will keep you safe online.

- **Make sure that your computer is secure**

It is **essential** that your computer is protected by a *firewall*, and by up-to date *anti-virus* and *anti-spyware* software. The computers used for Get Digital have these installed. If you have your own computer, the Get Digital Tutor will demonstrate how they work and advise you about suitable products.

- **Don't open spam**

*Spam* is email that is sent automatically to millions of addresses. It usually advertises things such as drugs or pornography.

If you receive an e-mail from someone that you have never heard of, **don't** open it. Delete it immediately. If you do open it by accident, **don't** click on any links. **Never** reply to a spam message.

- **Protect your personal information**

Never give your passwords, PIN numbers or bank account numbers to anyone. Criminals send out emails that look very authentic, asking you to confirm your PIN or go to a website and log in. If you receive such an email, do **not** reply or click on any links. Delete it.

- **Shop safely**

Only buy from online retailers that have a good reputation, either as "high street" shops, or established online stores. If you buy from auction sites such as eBay follow their security advice very carefully. Never download pirated software, music or videos.

- **Use secure connections for personal data**

If you are using a website and need to give credit or debit card details, it is essential that the website sets up a **secure connection** with your pc. You will know that you have a secure connection because the website address will start **https://**, and a small padlock will be displayed.

It will be next to the address if you use Internet Explorer 8, or at the bottom right corner of the page in Firefox.

For more information see **Get Safe Online**, a website set up by the Government and leading banks and IT organisations.

[www.getsafeonline.org](http://www.getsafeonline.org)