Objective 6

Advanced Options for Greater Security and Privacy

WHAT YOU NEED TO KNOW

Securing a home network is not as bold of a challenge as it once was. No home network is completely impenetrable, but there are things that you can do to be as safe as possible. By utilizing VPNs and antivirus software, you can help to keep your online activity secure.

Virtual Private Networks

A Virtual Private Network (VPN) is a type of software that allows consumers (personal and business) to encrypt their online information and activity. This connection, sometimes referred to as a tunnel, masks the user's online data. A VPN will not make you invincible, but it can greatly help protect you and your privacy.

A VPN can allow a user to appear like they are in another geographical location. VPN services typically provide their users with a great deal of anonymity when navigating online, which can make it more challenging for marketers and advertisers to track your digital footprint.

Another reason to use a VPN is if you regularly access public Wi-Fi. Connecting a device to a public network puts your personal data at risk because of the unknown identify of any other user on that network. Adding a VPN will provide greater privacy while online.

Antivirus Software

A malicious cyberattack is typically done to cause harm to a computer, network, or gain access to sensitive data. Malware generally refers to software that causes disruption, leaks information, or deprives access to technology. A home network and its connected devices are never going to be 100% secure, but antivirus software designed to aid in protection can give an additional level of security.

Up-to-date antivirus software can be added to your home network security. Many have a low cost of entry and some are free. Antivirus software typically provides a more secure browsing experience and monitors downloads being made so no malware can affect the network or its devices. They will often detect unwanted activity and notify when a suspicious threat occurs.

HOW THIS HELPS YOU

Individuals are increasingly needing to be online and potentially expose their digital privacy. This traffic will undoubtedly contain individuals looking to do something nefarious. Taking some precautionary measures can help safeguard against cybersecurity risks.

THINGS TO KEEP IN MIND

Your devices and network are exposed and vulnerable just by connecting to the internet. The chances of getting infected by malware diminishes by installing antivirus software and updates to devices.

If you are using a Microsoft or Windows computer, Microsoft Defender is a free product that protects products operating on the Windows system. Microsoft periodically will monitor suspicious activity and update their security protocols and recommendations for its users.

Apple and its products have built their brand largely around security and privacy for their MacBooks as well as their iPhone. By updating these device's software and operating systems, the user is updating to the most secure system available through Apple. The best way to keep your Apple devices secure is to be on the latest software. As new updates become available, users can manually install them or opt-in for an automatic installation.

Top VPN service providers design their apps to be intuitive and easy-to-use. Many VPN services will have an option to add the VPN security capabilities to a mobile device, which will protect the user even when using their phone. A typical VPN subscription is affordable considering the peace of mind that one can provide, usually priced between $5-$10 a month.

BEST PRACTICES

Start Simple
- Keep your devices up to date
- Install antivirus software to add another layer of protection
- Install a VPN on your computer or mobile device to allow for an added layer of privacy

Consider reaching out to a current provider (mobile carrier, home TV services) and see if that company offers a VPN option. Many times, bundling multiple services will save money.

RESOURCES

Be Internet Awesome
https://beinternetawesome.withgoogle.com

CNET - Best Antivirus Software
https://www.cnet.com/tech/services-and-software/best-antivirus/

MOREnet
Be better connected.