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Every year since 2003, October has been recognized as National Cyber Security Awareness Month (NCSAM). The Internet touches almost all aspects of everyone's daily life, whether we realize it or not. This effort was brought to life through collaboration between the U.S. Department of Homeland Security and the National Cyber Security Alliance. NCSAM was created to ensure that every individual stays safe and secure online.

Common Best Practices

Realize you are a target to hackers. Don't ever say "It won't happen to me."

Practice good password management. Use a strong mix of characters, and don't use the same password for multiple sites. Don't share your password with others and don't write it down.

If you need to leave your computer, phone, or tablet unattended for any length of time, lock it up, so no one can use it while you're gone.

Always be careful when clicking on attachments or links in email. If it's unexpected or suspicious for any reason, don't click on it.

Sensitive browsing, such as banking, should only be done on a device and network that belongs to you.

Back up your data regularly, and make sure your anti-virus software is always up to date.

Be conscientious of what you plug in to your computer. Malware can be spread through infected flash drives, external hard drives, and even smartphones.

Watch what you're sharing on social networks. Criminals can befriend you and easily gain access to a shocking amount of information that could help them gain access to more valuable data.

Offline, be wary if someone calls or emails you asking for sensitive information. It's okay to say no. You can always call the company directly to verify credentials before giving out any information.

Monitor your accounts on a regular basis for any suspicious activity. If you see something unfamiliar, it could be a sign that your account activity has been compromised.