

Beware of Internet Scams when Surfing

According to the Pew Internet & American Life Project, between 2009 and 2010, social network usage among internet users age 64 and over, grew from 13% to 26%. Nielson reported that there are currently around 17.5 million seniors actively using the internet.

But with this increase in usage, there is also an increased risk. Often, internet users of all ages can give away personal information without even realizing it. This information can be used by criminals to gain access to your accounts or to find out when you're not home.

AARP offers some tips on what information to keep private.

Many people leave "out of office replies" when they will be gone from work. While this may be helpful to co-workers, be careful what information you include. AARP says, "Leaving a message that says, 'Gone 11/2–11/12. I'm taking the family to Hawaii for 10 days,' may make you a prime target for burglary."

Many websites offer free credit checks. Be careful to only use those that are guaranteed reputable. The information that is asked for on these sites can be used to abuse your credit.

Keep your address and phone number discreet. Abuses of this information typically will only result in an increase of junk mail. However, knowledge of this information may make your home more an attraction option for burglary.

Although, seniors do need to be careful, sharing information online with friends and family can be a great way to keep in touch. The key is to avoid sharing information with unwanted parties. Visit www.aarp.org/technology for more tips.