Do Not Take Internet Security Lightly

The Internet is both a wonderful place and also a potentially dangerous world. Beyond containing so much information and websites that help us in our daily lives, it also has many fraudsters, scammers, dangerous programs (*such as viruses, malware, spyware, adware etc...)* that can steal your personal information (*for identity theft by scammers*) or may end up erasing your hard drive and cost you hundreds of dollars to have your system repaired.

Here are some basic tips that can help you protect your computer and yourself from the hazards that exist online.

1. Anti-Virus and Internet Security Software

This type of software is designed especially to protect your computer system, personal information and yourself while online. Anti-virus software comes in two main categories: freeware versions or yearly subscription services. The main difference between the two is functionality and the online database. Yearly subscription services update their virus databases more regularly, which offer you a greater level of protection. Also, subscription services also offer a higher level of user support as freeware versions don't have anything available should your system have problems. Anti-virus software can often come in internet security packages. These contain all you need to feel safe online, not just with viruses. The programs come with firewalls, backup software, identity theft and personal information protection applications, and other services depending on the company or the product. Should you choose a free anti-virus program, you will have to also download and install separate programs for adware as a firewall service etc.

2. Backup of Your Computer System and Files

This is the best way to keep all your information safe and secure. Computers aren't perfect, and will have problems over time. Backing up your files and documents regularly (*about once a week is recommended*) will keep all your valuable information safe. There are many different types of backup software available, from freeware to paid-for versions. For your home computer, a free program is perfect and will do everything you need. The options available to backup your files have grown with computers. An external hard drive is highly recommended due to the size and speed it is capable of. For those who don't have access to this, blank DVDs and CDs do help, however for large amounts of data they can be quite the pain due to how many discs you will need. Also, some companies offer an online backup service with the option to purchase more data storage should you need it.

3. Passwords and Security

Passwords are often the only way to get into your personal information and the type of password you use can determine how secure your information is. Many sites will let you know how secure your password is and also recommend that you put in a stronger password. A mixture of lowercase and capital letters, the use of numbers, avoiding birthdates or other easily known numbers is recommended, as well as using secret questions that are hard to guess.