

## - Computer crimes

# HERE'S HOW YOU CAN SAFEGUARD YOUR SMARTPHONE FROM ONLINE FRAUD

Smartphones have become an indispensable part of our lives, but they are also a medium fraudsters stay alert and safe use to cheat us. These tips can help you

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HT Cafe · 31 Dec 2021 · 6

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A phone, at one point of time, was merely a communication device. But modern day smartphones have become an essential element of our lives. From business, banking and shopping to studying and entertainment, smartphones are involved in almost every aspect of life. While they help make life easier, there is also a downside to this device. According to the Pew Research Center, phone users check their devices over 50 times a day on average, making them vulnerable to cyber attacks. But, taking certain precautions and staying alert can help reduce the risk. Here are five ways to do just that.

### CHECK YOUR WIRELESS NETWORKS

We all seek wireless networks, be it WiFi at our workplace or home, or a mobile hotspot when outside. Any device that can transport data over the airwaves is a potential security risk. The first rule is to always turn off a wireless connection when not in use. This prevents malicious parties from connecting to your device without your knowledge. When it comes to utilising this access, wireless hotspots and unknown networks pose the most risk.

**PROTECT YOUR CALLS** Your device can be in danger while taking phishing calls, so it is always a good idea to have measures in place to keep it protected. There are several third-party apps available on a paid basis that can do the job for you. Burner is a paid service that protects your personal information by generating fresh phone numbers that can be used for as long as you want. Firewall is another paid service for iPhone users to send unwelcome calls directly to voicemail without even hearing them ring.

### EXERCISE CAUTION WITH APPLICATIONS

While downloading a new app/ software from the Play Store or App Store, you need to pay attention to the permissions it asks for during installation. Similarly, you need to look at the permissions that you are allowing while visiting a new website on a browser.

### DON'T FORGET TO UPDATE SOFTWARE

No matter how much you delay or ignore software updates, this is one of the safest ways to keep your device free from the risk of getting attacked. Additionally, security software can enable you to keep your phone away from malware and, if it has GPS capabilities, it can display the location of a device in case of theft. The software can also provide more typical virus, spam and firewall security.

**VPN IS A SAFER OPTION** Virtual Private Networks or VPNs allow you to connect to a private network over the internet in a safe way. You can send and receive data over public or shared networks without it being visible to unauthorised users as it assigns you a temporary IP address and hides your genuine IP address from every website or email you connect with. Thus, your data is kept safe and confidential.

**EXCESSIVE USE OF SMARTPHONES HAS MADE THEM MORE ACCESSIBLE TO ONLINE HACKERS/ FRAUDSTERS, MAKING USERS THE TARGET OF MALICIOUS ACTS**