- Cyber security / Data privacy

Five healthy digital habits for 2023

BusinessMirror · 12 Jan 2023 · B5

OUR lives are getting more digital by the minute. At the same time, we are also getting more exposed to "cyber surprises" that are also evolving at a rapid clip. Here are some healthy digital habits suggested by cybersecurity specialist Kaspersky that can strengthen the safety of your personal data as well as your family's, and make life protected and easier in the coming year:



1. New Year, new passwords. Start the New Year with a real password revision. Now is the time to check and change passwords on all accounts. And remember the main rule—don't use the same password for multiple accounts. If you are like many people and have several online accounts, then a reliable password manager is a good help. Modern password managers have features that greatly simplify life with passwords. For example, you can use auto-fill features for different browsers and platforms. Another handy option is the automatic password generator. As a result, a password manager will help you generate unique and complex passwords for each account—and you only need to remember one master password.

2. Subscribe to notifications about account data leaks. Besides weak passwords, data leaks are another threat to your personal and corporate accounts. Unfortunately, data breaches happen quite often, and it's hard to keep track of all of them. If your account details leak, fraudsters can use them to take over your accounts. However, you can get ahead of scammers in 2023 if you use services that scan the latest leaks and look whether they contain your data. Advanced password managers include this feature as well and quickly notify users if any of the saved logins or passwords are found in the data leaks.

3. Need more privacy, get a VPN. Once a niche product for geeky users and businesses, VPNS are now a must-have for anyone who wants to stay safe and private online. Modern

VPN solutions meet all user needs—they are easy to use, provide high traffic speeds, and keep personal data private. Now the range of possible scenarios for using a VPN has expanded significantly. It allows you to securely shop online, watch streaming services from anywhere in the world, or access local content. Modern VPN services also provide high-traffic speeds and let users watch content even in 4K without quality loss or delays. Moreover, it hides your IP address from web sites and advertisers, granting better privacy. Web tracking can lead to unexpected consequences—for example, targeted ads can reveal the presents you bought for your family. Don't let advertisers spoil your next celebration.

4. Transfer documents to a safe place. With the development of digital services, scans and electronic versions of documents are now used as often as their paper originals. This raises a reasonable question— how to store electronic versions so they remain safe and do not fall into unwanted hands? You can create a folder on your computer or upload them to a password-protected cloud—but both of these options are potentially insecure and can lead to the loss of personal data.

A secure alternative would be to store documents in a password manager app. Modern password managers are capable of storing more than just passwords or banking data. Most now double as fullfledged encrypted electronic storages where you can upload scans, PDFS and other important documents that you want to protect. This can also include medical records and telephone addresses, as well as any documentation or files related to work and business.

At the same time, such storage services are many times safer compared to more traditional storage locations, because they are specially encrypted, and can be decrypted only with the help of one master password, which should only be in the user's head.

5. Learn more about child's hobbies on the Internet. Today, children have digital devices in their hands from an early age—about five years old. For a child's path to the digital world to be safe and interesting, it is important to teach and share with them the rules of online safety from childhood. To make such talks more enjoyable and interesting, parents can use games and other entertaining formats.

Another tip for the New Year is to dive deep into your kids' online interests. For instance, parents can ask about a favorite series, or listen to music tracks together so you can both learn together some secure practices to stay safe online. There are also a range of child safety software that can help parents learn more about kids' hobbies, and help kids develop healthy digital habits from an early age.

"Privacy and security are not a result but a process. Just like you cannot get fit or become a healthy-eating person overnight, securing your account and digital footprint also requires some dedication. However, small steps such as creating unique passwords for different accounts and using advanced tools like password managers can greatly boost your privacy while making this task much simpler. And there's no better time to start a new, more secure digital life than in the new year," said Vladislav Tushkanov, lead data scientist at Kaspersky. ■