

Learn how to protect your Digital Identity

October 14, 2024

TLP: CLEAR



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October is globally recognized as Cybersecurity Awareness Month, a time to focus on the importance of keeping our digital identities safe. As we spend more time online—whether for work, shopping, socializing, or banking—protecting your digital identity has never been more important. This week, we are focusing on pivotal role that robust authentication methods play in securing your personal information.

Why does cybersecurity matter? Every time you log in to a website or application, you leave a digital footprint. Cybercriminals are consistently seeking ways to exploit these footprints to steal personal information, financial data, or gain unauthorized access to your accounts. Therefore, your active participation in cybersecurity is essential. By adopting good cyber habits and staying informed about the latest threats, we can collectively create a safer online environment for everyone.

How can you protect your digital identity?

One of the most effective measures is to use a **passphrase** instead of a traditional password. A passphrase is typically longer and more complex, making it significantly harder for hackers to crack. While a standard password may contain just a few characters, a passphrase can be a sentence or a combination of random words, providing much stronger security. Additionally, using a password manager is highly recommended. This tool helps you create and store strong, unique passwords for every account, reducing the chance of reusing weak or compromised passwords.

Another powerful tool in your cybersecurity toolkit is **Multi-Factor Authentication (MFA)**. MFA adds an extra layer of security to your login process. Instead of just entering a password, you will be required to provide an additional piece of information, such as a code sent to your phone or a fingerprint scan. This means that even if a cybercriminal somehow obtains your password, they cannot access your account without the second factor. Many organizations are adopting MFA because it significantly enhances security, making it more difficult for unauthorized users to gain access.

When setting up MFA, it is highly recommended to use an authenticator app to generate a one-time secure code. This is more secure than receiving codes via SMS, as text messages can be vulnerable to certain types of attacks. An authenticator app is less susceptible to hacking attempts and offers better protection against unauthorized access.

In addition to passphrases and MFA, here are some other important tips to protect your digital identity:

Be aware of Generative AI threats: Cybercriminals are using advanced techniques like Generative Artificial Intelligence (AI) to create very convincing fake emails, voices, or even simulated images. These AI-generated threats are sophisticated and can be difficult to detect, so it is important to remain cautious when receiving unexpected communications.

Understand SIM swapping attacks: In a SIM swap attack, a hacker takes control of your phone number by transferring it to another SIM card. Once they have your number, they can intercept messages and security codes sent to your phone. If you notice your phone displaying "SOS" or losing signal for no apparent reason, it could be a sign that your SIM card has been compromised. If this occurs, contact your mobile carrier immediately.

Keep your devices updated: Regularly updating your phone, tablet, and computer ensures that you receive the latest security patches. These updates often fix vulnerabilities that could be exploited by cybercriminals, so staying up to date is a simple yet crucial step in protecting yourself.

By following these tips, you can significantly reduce the risk of your digital identity being compromised. While cybersecurity might seem daunting, small actions—such as using a passphrase, enabling MFA, and staying alert to emerging threats—can go a long way in keeping your information safe.

For more information, please visit [Cybersecurity awareness and training](#) area of [CyberAlberta](#)