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The Importance of Internet Safety

In today's age of technology, we tend to enjoy spending time on social media instead of face-to-face communication, especially now because of the epidemic, most of us smoothly switching to virtual communication. Despite this, when we sign up for apps, have you ever read the terms and agreements before making a new account? Honestly, I haven't. We all know that those are super long, and when I need to use the software, I usually just click agree and start using it. The internet really makes our lives more convenient, but it also brings some dangers. Today, I would like to talk about one of the biggest community issues which is internet safety by discussing the influence of social media, what internet privacy is, and share with you some strategies to protect our personal data.

Are you aware that you are in danger because of privacy disclosure? One research indicated that *“users trust that their data is safe and share their daily activities on Facebook. Criminals can use this information to track users' movements and map their patterns, resulting in a high number of scams on Facebook.”* Interestingly, I recently made a Facebook account for my mom and added her name and birthday. I then noticed something weird happening. The friend suggestion list even showed my middle school teachers, my mom's colleagues, and our church members. It is incredible how Facebook knows our friend's circle and seems to be monitoring our life. That is the power of technology and this also causes fear in users. At the same time, I can't imagine what would happen if those big tech companies found only a few basic details and were able to track our real lives and the information was misused.

I believe that none of us are willing to give away our privacy. So what is internet privacy? According to one article, *internet privacy is a subset of data privacy and is a fundamental human right. Basically, it refers to the personal privacy that you're entitled to when you display, store, or provide information regarding yourself on the internet.* In a survey we did recently, we found some experiences of internet fraud. They said someone stole their friends account and tried to cheat them out of money. They used fake advertising, scam emails, contacted them via social media and other message platforms, and also they ordered something

online but never received the package. One of my friends told me that she received a call recently, and the man on the phone said he's from Amazon Customer Service and he found an overcharged order on her account and could help her with the refund process. My friend was very happy and thought he was a helpful person. She didn't have any doubts because she did buy something on the website. Fortunately, she ended up stuck there the whole night because of some wifi issues, and the next day when she went to the bank to make a deposit. Since she was at the bank, she went ahead and asked about it. They said you might have been scammed. Well, thank God her wifi didn't work so well that night.

Since we can't fight hackers like the internet elite, it is important for us to know what we can do to protect ourselves. One article published on Saipan Tribune suggests the general public to use strict privacy settings on your computer, devices, and browsers, and keep passwords private and complex. Always be careful when sharing your personal information on social media such as mailing address and location. Remember to update your software regularly, and also try to use antivirus software. One thing we better keep in mind is to never easily trust someone on the phone. If something similar happens to you, you can check with Amazon or verify with the bank first, instead of following the callers instructions.

Internet safety should be taken seriously because it may affect the future generations. Especially in today's society, it seems like we can't live without technology. Since most users lack awareness on social media, it is necessary for us to let more people know the meaning of internet privacy and how to avoid the problem by using some useful strategies. If we are still enjoying the nice virtual world created by the internet with no worries, please wake up! Sometimes the internet is more dangerous than our experiences in reality, so everyone should establish internet safety awareness, so as to better protect ourselves.