

**Cochise College Center for Lifelong Learning**

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## **Overview of the Internet**

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*For Lifelong Learners*

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### Expectations

Developed for first-time Internet users and novices, this workshop explains what the Internet is and how to effectively use a browser like Chrome or Edge. The class includes tips and tricks for effective internet searches and how to navigate the internet like a pro. Internet safety practices are emphasized so students can more effectively secure their personal information online.

## Module 1: Understanding the Internet and the Web

### The Internet: The Lifeblood of Modern Society

In today's fast-paced world, the Internet has become nothing short of indispensable. It's more than just a technological marvel—it's the lifeblood of modern society. Here's why the Internet's importance can't be overstated:

**A Vast Information Repository:** The Internet is a boundless source of knowledge, offering access to information on virtually any topic. Whether you're researching for work, learning a new skill, or satisfying your curiosity, the Internet is your go-to library, open 24/7.

**Global Connectivity:** The Internet shrinks the world. It enables instant communication with loved ones across continents, fostering global friendships and cultural exchanges. Video calls and social media platforms make distance feel irrelevant.

**Economic Engine:** Online commerce is booming. From shopping for everyday essentials to launching global businesses, the Internet has revolutionized the way we buy and sell. It's a marketplace that never sleeps.

**Remote Work and Learning:** Especially relevant in recent times, the Internet has made remote work and online education accessible. It offers flexibility and new opportunities, changing the way we approach careers and learning.

**Endless Entertainment:** Streaming services, gaming, and social media provide endless entertainment options. It's where you binge-watch your favorite series, connect with fellow enthusiasts, and discover new passions.

**Awareness and Activism:** Social media platforms amplify social and political movements. They're tools for raising awareness, mobilizing communities, and advocating for change.

**Lifelong Learning:** Online courses and resources empower lifelong learning. It's never too late to acquire new skills, explore hobbies, or embark on academic pursuits.

In a nutshell, the Internet isn't just a tool—it's a transformative force that shapes how we live, work, learn, and connect. It's a testament to human innovation and the gateway to endless possibilities. As you navigate this digital landscape, remember to use it responsibly, harness its potential, and make the most of the incredible resource that is the Internet.

## Internet vs. The Web

The terms "Internet" and "The Web" are often used interchangeably, but they refer to distinct components of our digital landscape. Let's unravel the difference between the two, along with some common terminology:

### Internet

The Internet is the foundational infrastructure, the vast network of interconnected computers and devices that span the globe. It's like the highway system that allows data to travel. It encompasses various services and technologies, with the World Wide Web being just one of them.

### The Web

The Web, is a subset of the Internet. It's a collection of multimedia documents (web pages) linked together by hyperlinks. Think of it as the information you access using a web browser like Chrome or Firefox.

### Other Internet Services

The Internet offers a wide range of services beyond the World Wide Web. Here are some of the most notable:

**Email:** Electronic mail, or email, allows you to send and receive messages and files over the internet. Services like Gmail, Yahoo Mail, and Outlook are popular email providers.

**File Transfer Protocol (FTP):** FTP is used for uploading and downloading files between computers on the internet. It's often employed for website maintenance and file sharing.

**Instant Messaging (IM):** IM services like WhatsApp, Facebook Messenger, and Slack enable real-time text, voice, and video communication with individuals and groups.

**VoIP (Voice over Internet Protocol):** VoIP services such as Skype and Zoom allow you to make voice and video calls over the internet, often at lower costs than traditional phone services.

**Online Gaming:** Online gaming platforms like Steam, Xbox Live, and PlayStation Network provide multiplayer gaming experiences and digital game distribution.

**Streaming Services:** Services like Netflix, Spotify, and YouTube offer streaming of movies, music, and videos over the internet.

**Online Storage and Backup:** Cloud storage services like Google Drive, Dropbox, and iCloud let you store and sync files across devices.

**Internet of Things (IoT) Services:** These services connect and control smart devices like thermostats, cameras, and lights via the internet.

### Common Terms

**URL (Uniform Resource Locator):** A URL is like a web address. It's a string of characters that specify the location of a resource on the Internet. For example, "https://www.georgeteaches.com" is a URL. It tells your browser where to find a specific website.

**Website:** A website is a collection of related web pages hosted on web servers. It's like a digital storefront or a book with multiple chapters. Each page can contain text, images, videos, and links to other pages.

**Hyperlink:** Hyperlinks, often referred to as links, are like magical bridges on the web. They are clickable elements that connect one web page to another, allowing you to navigate the Internet seamlessly. When you click a hyperlink, it takes you to a different page or resource.

**Search Engine:** Search engines, like Google and Bing, are your friendly librarians in the digital world. They index the vast web, making it easy to find specific information. When you type a query, the search engine provides a list of relevant web pages.

**Wi-Fi:** This is a way to connect to the Internet without using a cable. It uses a wireless signal to connect your device (like a laptop, tablet, or smartphone) to a local network, such as the one in your home, a coffee shop, or a library. To use Wi-Fi, your device needs to be in range of a router and you may need a password to connect.

**Mobile Data:** Mobile data lets you connect to the Internet using a cellular signal, like the one your phone uses to make calls. If you have a smartphone or tablet with a data plan, you can go online even when there's no Wi-Fi nearby. Be careful—using mobile data can use up your monthly limit, especially when watching videos or downloading files.

**Cloud Services:** Cloud services let you store files and use programs on the Internet instead of just on your own computer. Examples include *Google Drive*, *Microsoft OneDrive*, and *Apple iCloud*. With cloud services, you can access your documents, photos, and other files from any device, anywhere you have an Internet connection.

In summary, the Internet is a massive network that connects devices globally, while The Web is a subset of the Internet, consisting of interconnected web pages accessed through web browsers. Understanding these terms and their distinctions is crucial for navigating the digital realm effectively.

## Module 2: Navigating the Web

### Top 5 Web Browsers

When it comes to web browsers, there are several options available today, each with its own strengths and weaknesses. Here's an overview of the most popular web browsers.

**Google Chrome (71%):** Google's Chrome is renowned for its speed and user-friendly interface. However, it can be resource-intensive, and some users express concerns about data collection practices.

**Safari (15%):** Apple's Safari offers seamless integration within the Apple ecosystem, providing optimized performance on macOS and iOS devices. Its availability is limited to Apple platforms.

**Microsoft Edge (5%):** Microsoft's Edge browser, built on the Chromium engine, delivers enhanced compatibility and performance. It integrates well with Windows services but has a smaller extension library compared to Chrome.

**Firefox (2%):** Mozilla's Firefox is celebrated for its commitment to privacy and customization options. While it has a smaller market share, it boasts a loyal user base.

**Others:** There are several niche browsers used by a few people, like the browsers from Samsung and Opera.

### Activity 2.1: Start The Browser

1. Start by typing *Chrome* into the Windows search box down in the bottom-left corner of your screen.
2. Look for the *Google Chrome* link in the search results and give it a click. That's your gateway to the web!
3. With *Chrome* open, enter *google.com* in the search bar at the top of the screen and press **Enter**.
4. Click Google's search box and type *dogs*.
5. When the search results appear, start scrolling to explore the links *Google* returns.

## Unveiling the Power of Search Engines

In today's digital age, search engines have become our compasses in the vast wilderness of the Internet. These virtual guides help us navigate the billions of web pages to find the information we seek. But what exactly is the purpose of search engines, and why are they so crucial in our online journeys?

### The Purpose of Search Engines

Search engines are specialized software applications designed to retrieve and display information from the World Wide Web. Their primary purpose is to assist users in finding relevant content quickly and efficiently. Here's how they do it:

**Indexing the Web:** Search engines use "spiders" to continuously explore the web and index the content of web pages. Think of it as building a massive library catalog, with each web page represented by a card in the catalog.

**Responding to Queries:** When a user enters a search query, the search engine sifts through its vast index, looking for pages that match the query. It considers various factors, including keyword relevance, website authority, and user experience.

**Presenting Results:** Most search engines then display a summary of the web pages then a list of search results, ranked by relevance. Each result typically includes a title, snippet of content, and a URL. This allows users to preview and select the most relevant pages.

### Why Are Search Engines Important

Search engines are gateways to the Internet, and their importance cannot be overstated.

**Information Retrieval:** They enable users to access a wealth of information, from academic research to local restaurant reviews, with a simple query.

**Time Efficiency:** Search engines save time by quickly delivering relevant results. Instead of sifting through pages of irrelevant content, users get what they need within seconds.

**Discoverability:** They aid in discovering new websites, businesses, and resources, supporting both users and content creators.

## Comparing Popular Search Engines

**Google:** Google is the reigning king of search engines, known for its lightning-fast and accurate search results. It offers personalized results based on user behavior and is integrated with a suite of other services like Gmail and Google Maps.

**Bing:** Microsoft's Bing provides robust competition to Google, with visually appealing search results and an integrated rewards program. It's also the default search engine for Microsoft's Edge browser.

**DuckDuckGo:** DuckDuckGo stands out for its unwavering commitment to user privacy. It doesn't track or personalize search results, making it an attractive option for those concerned about data privacy.

### Activity 2.2: Search With Google

1. With *Google Chrome* still open, create a new tab by clicking the **Plus** button on the right of the last tab.
2. In the search box, type the name of a city you know to discover its population.
3. Open a new tab and search for information about climate change. To determine the reliability of the returned links, use clues like the source domain, contact information, and similar information on other reputable sites.
4. To find scholarly papers or court cases, go to `scholar.google.com` and press **Enter**. Now, find a research report about coal mining.

### Activity 2.3: Default Search Engine

1. In *Google Chrome*, click the **three dot** menu button in the top right corner of the screen.
2. Select **Settings**.
3. On the settings page, select **Search Engine**.
4. Select **DuckDuckGo** as the new default search engine.

5. Close the *Settings* tab by clicking the **X** button on the right edge of the tab's title.

## Artificial Intelligence and the Internet

Artificial Intelligence (AI) has quickly become a major part of how we use the Internet. You've probably heard terms like "AI," "ChatGPT," or "chatbot" in the news. But what do they actually mean?

**What Is AI?** Artificial Intelligence refers to computer programs that can perform tasks that normally require human thinking—like understanding questions, writing text, or recognizing images. AI doesn't "think" the way people do. Instead, it finds patterns in enormous amounts of text and data, and uses those patterns to generate responses.

**AI Chatbots:** The most common way people interact with AI today is through chatbots like *ChatGPT*, *Microsoft Copilot*, and *Google Gemini*. You type a question or request, and the AI generates a response. These tools can summarize articles, explain concepts, write drafts, and answer questions on a wide variety of topics.

**AI in Search:** Search engines like Google and Bing now use AI to provide summaries at the top of search results. Instead of just giving you a list of links, they may generate a written answer to your question. This can be helpful, but it's still important to verify the information by checking the original sources.

**Important Limitations:** AI tools can be confidently wrong. They sometimes generate information that sounds correct but isn't—this is sometimes called a "hallucination." Always double-check important facts, especially for health, legal, or financial questions. Think of AI as a helpful starting point, not the final word.

### Activity 2.4: Explore AI With ChatGPT

1. Create a new tab by clicking the **Plus** button on the right of the last tab.
2. Type `chatgpt.com` in the address bar and press **Enter**.
3. In the message box, type `What are the five largest cities in Arizona?` and press **Enter**.
4. Now try asking it to explain something: type `Explain how Wi-Fi works in simple terms.`
5. Try a creative request: type `Write a short poem about the Arizona desert.`
6. Finally, ask it something you're curious about—any topic you like!
7. **Note:** The Center for Lifelong Learning offers AI classes. If you are interested in this topic, consider taking one of those classes.

### Activity 2.5: Search With AI

1. Create a new tab by clicking the **Plus** button on the right of the last tab.
2. Type `copilot.microsoft.com` in the address bar and press **Enter**.
3. Enter this prompt: What is the population of Tucson, AZ?
4. Notice how Copilot provides an answer with sources. Compare this to a regular Google search for the same question.
5. Enter this prompt: Write a short poem about summer.
6. Compare how Copilot's responses differ from ChatGPT's. Each AI tool has its own style.

## Exploring and Organizing Bookmarks in Google Chrome

### Activity 2.6: Web Shortcuts

1. Create a new tab by clicking the **Plus** button on the right of the last tab.
2. In the address bar, enter `https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Arizona`
3. To save this link, look for the **Add Favorite** star on the right side of the address bar. Click it and choose the **Favorites Bar**.
4. Right-click *Arizona – Wikipedia* on the *Favorites Bar*, select **Edit**, and change its name to *Arizona*. Don't forget to save!
5. To remove a favorite, right-click the updated *Arizona* on the *Favorites Bar* and select **Delete**.
6. Right-click the web address in *Google Chrome* and choose **Copy**.
7. Right-click on the desktop and select **Shortcut**.
8. Paste the web address into the *Location* text box and click **Next**.
9. Give your shortcut a memorable name and click **OK**.

## Exploring the Social Media Landscape

Social media has revolutionized the way we connect, share, and communicate in our digital age. It's a dynamic world where individuals and communities come together, transcending geographical boundaries.



## Understanding Social Media

Social media is an online ecosystem where users create, share, and interact with content. It encompasses a wide array of platforms, each with its unique features and purposes. Here are the most popular social media platforms as of early 2026 (monthly active users are indicated).

**Facebook (3.2 billion):** Launched in 2004, Facebook remains the largest social networking site globally. It offers a platform for users to connect with friends and family, share updates, and join interest-based groups. However, concerns about privacy and data security have been longstanding issues.

**YouTube (2.85 billion):** Established in 2005, YouTube is a video-sharing platform where users can upload, view, and interact with content. It's a hub for entertainment, education, and news. While it provides vast content, the platform has faced criticism over content moderation policies.

**Instagram (2.5 billion):** Debuted in 2010, Instagram focuses on photo and video sharing, allowing users to apply filters and share moments. It's popular among younger demographics and influencers. However, studies suggest it can impact mental health due to social comparison.

**WhatsApp (2.5 billion):** Introduced in 2009, WhatsApp is a messaging app enabling text, voice, and video communications. It's favored for its end-to-end encryption, ensuring user privacy. Nonetheless, it has been used to spread misinformation due to its private nature.

**TikTok (1.7 billion):** Since its 2016 launch, TikTok has rapidly gained popularity, especially among Gen Z, for its short-form video content. It's known for viral challenges and trends. TikTok faced a brief US ban in January 2025 over data privacy concerns, but service was quickly restored and a deal was reached in early 2026 to keep the platform operating in the US.

These platforms, each with their unique features and user base, reflect the varied ways people connect, share, and consume content online in 2026.

### Activity 2.7: Explore YouTube

1. Create a new tab by clicking the **Plus** button on the right of the last tab.
2. In the address bar, enter `youtube.com`.
3. Browse a few of the YouTube videos available. Using the YouTube search feature, look for these types of videos:
  - Podcast about science
  - Full-length action movie
  - Tutorial about drawing
  - Product review for iPhone 17

- Behind the scenes at a football game

### Activity 2.8: Common Online Activities

#### Maps

1. Create a new tab by clicking the **Plus** button on the right of the last tab.
2. In the address bar, enter `maps.google.com`.
3. On the map search box, enter Grand Canyon Village.
4. Drag and drop the *Pegman* (the small yellow person icon in the bottom-right corner) onto the map to explore the village. See if you can find a view of the Grand Canyon.

#### Shopping

1. Create a new tab by clicking the **Plus** button on the right of the last tab.
2. In the address bar, enter `etsy.com`.
3. Search for a child's apron.

#### Virtual Tours

1. Create a new tab by clicking the **Plus** button on the right of the last tab.
2. In the address bar, enter `virtualyosemite.org`.
3. From the Virtual Yosemite home page, click **Explore the Park Like Never Before** or any of the virtual tours listed below that link.

#### Recipes

1. Create a new tab by clicking the **Plus** button on the right of the last tab.
2. In the address bar, enter `jojorecipes.com/meatloaf/`.
3. Explore the site to look for other recipes.

## Module 3: Navigating Online Safely

In our increasingly digital world, where online activities have become an integral part of daily life, it's crucial to be aware of common online threats and take measures to stay secure. Here, we'll explore some prevalent online dangers, such as malware and phishing, and offer tips to safeguard your digital presence.

## Tips for Staying Safe Online

**Use Strong Passwords.** Create passwords that are hard for others to guess. A good password uses a mix of letters, numbers, and symbols. Don't reuse the same password for different accounts. If that sounds like a lot to remember, a password manager (a secure app that stores your passwords) can help.

**Keep Software Updated.** When your computer or phone asks to install updates, say yes. These updates often fix problems that could let hackers in. This includes your operating system, browser (like Chrome or Edge), and any apps you use.

**Be Careful with Email.** If you don't know who sent you an email, or something about it feels odd—don't open any links or attachments. Scammers often try to trick you into clicking things that look real but aren't.

**Add Extra Security with 2FA.** Two-Factor Authentication (2FA) means you need a second step (like a text code) to log in. It's one of the best ways to protect your accounts and is worth setting up when available.

**Use Antivirus Protection.** Good antivirus software helps protect your computer from viruses and other threats. Let it run regular scans to catch problems early.

**Protect Your Wi-Fi.** Make sure your home Wi-Fi has a password that isn't easy to guess. Never use "public" Wi-Fi (like in coffee shops) to check your bank account or enter private info.

**Think Before You Share on Social Media.** Don't post personal details like your birthday, address, or travel plans. Scammers can use that information to trick or target you.

**Lock Icon.** Look for the "lock" icon on websites. This indicates your information is encrypted, but does not necessarily mean the site is legitimate.

**Be Careful with AI Tools.** AI chatbots like ChatGPT and Copilot are useful, but don't share personal information with them—treat them like any other website. Also remember that AI can generate convincing but incorrect information, so always verify important answers with trusted sources.

**Trust Your Gut.** If something online feels off—like a deal that's too good to be true—it probably is. When in doubt, close the window and ask someone you trust.

### Final Thought

You don't need to be an expert to stay safe. Just taking a few simple precautions can go a long way toward protecting yourself online.

## Protecting Personal Information

In today's digital age, where information flows freely across the Internet, safeguarding your personal information has never been more critical. Your digital identity, comprising details such as your name, address, financial data, and even your online behavior, is valuable not only to you but also to malicious actors seeking to exploit it. Here, we'll delve into the importance of protecting personal information online and provide guidance on privacy settings and managing your online presence.

## Why Protecting Personal Information Matters

**Identity Theft:** Cybercriminals can use stolen personal information to impersonate you, commit financial fraud, or gain unauthorized access to your accounts.

**Privacy Preservation:** Keeping your personal information private helps protect your autonomy and control over what you share and with whom.

**Avoiding Scams:** Protecting your data reduces the risk of falling victim to scams, phishing attempts, or online fraud.

**Preventing Cyberbullying:** Personal information can be used for cyberbullying or harassment, affecting your mental and emotional well-being.

## Tips for Protecting Personal Information

**Privacy Settings:** Review and adjust privacy settings on social media platforms and other online services. Limit the amount of personal information visible to the public or even friends and acquaintances.

**Regularly Review Online Profiles:** Periodically review your online profiles and remove or limit personal information that you no longer wish to share.

**Monitor Financial Statements:** Regularly review your financial statements and credit reports for any unauthorized activity.

**Secure Your Devices:** Use reputable antivirus software, keep your devices up to date, and ensure your home Wi-Fi network is secured with a strong password.

**Be Cautious with Apps:** Only download apps from trusted sources, and review app permissions before installation.

### Activity 3.1: Browser Settings

1. Open *Google Chrome*.
2. Click the **three dot** menu button in the top-right corner of the screen.
3. From the menu options, select **Settings**.
4. In the Settings menu, click on **Privacy and Security**.
5. Interested in cookies? Click on **Cookies and other site data**, then look for the **Third-party cookies** option to restrict these tracking tools.
6. While you're here, look at the other privacy settings on this page.
7. Scroll to the bottom of the page and click **Address bar and search**.
8. To explore different search engines, click **Search engines**.
9. Now, take a comprehensive review of all your *Google Chrome* settings.
10. Once you've explored and personalized your settings, close the *Settings* tab.

## Understanding Common Online Threats

Knowledge is your first line of defense against online threats. Understanding what to watch for can help you avoid dangerous situations before they happen.

### Phishing Scams

Phishing is like digital fishing—scammers cast a wide net hoping someone will take the bait. They send fake emails, texts, or create fake websites that look like they're from legitimate companies (banks, stores, government agencies) to steal your personal information.

#### What to Watch For:

- Urgent messages claiming your account will be closed
- Requests for passwords, Social Security numbers, or banking info via email
- Links that don't match the company name they claim to be from
- Poor spelling or grammar in official-looking messages

### Online Shopping Scams

With the convenience of online shopping comes the risk of fake stores and fraudulent sellers.

#### Red Flags:

- Prices that seem too good to be true
- No contact information or customer service
- Websites that look unprofessional or have many spelling errors
- Requests to pay with gift cards, wire transfers, or cryptocurrency

### Tech Support Scams

Scammers may call or create pop-up messages claiming your computer has a virus, then offer to "fix" it for a fee or by gaining remote access to your device.

**Remember:** Legitimate tech companies don't make unsolicited calls about computer problems.

#### When in Doubt

If something feels suspicious, don't rush. Close the browser window, hang up the phone, or delete the email. You can always contact the company directly using a phone number you find yourself (not one provided in the suspicious message).

## Creating Strong Digital Habits

Building good online habits is like developing any other healthy routine—it takes practice but becomes second nature over time.

### Password Best Practices

**Create Unique Passwords:** Use different passwords for different accounts. If one gets compromised, the others remain safe.

**Make Them Strong:** A good password is at least 12 characters long and includes uppercase letters, lowercase letters, numbers, and symbols. Consider using a passphrase—a sentence that's easy for you to remember but hard for others to guess.

**Use a Password Manager:** These tools create and store strong passwords for you. Popular options include LastPass, Bitwarden, and the built-in password managers in browsers.

### Safe Browsing Habits

**Check Website Security:** Look for "https://" (the 's' stands for secure) and a lock icon in your browser's address bar before entering personal information.

**Keep Software Current:** Enable automatic updates for your operating system, browser, and antivirus software.

**Download Wisely:** Only download software from official websites or trusted app stores.

### Social Media Safety

**Review Privacy Settings:** Most social media platforms let you control who sees your posts and personal information. Take time to understand and adjust these settings.

**Think Before You Post:** Once something is online, it can be difficult to completely remove. Avoid posting sensitive personal information like your full address, phone number, or details about when you'll be away from home.

**Be Selective with Friend Requests:** Only connect with people you actually know.

#### Activity 3.2: Password Checkup

1. Create a new tab by clicking the **Plus** button.
2. Type `passwords.google.com` in the address bar and press **Enter**.
3. If prompted, sign in to your Google account.
4. Review the password checkup results (if you're comfortable doing so).
5. Notice which passwords Google identifies as weak, reused, or compromised.
6. Consider which accounts are most important to secure first (banking, email,

shopping).

**Note:** This activity is optional and should only be done if you're comfortable using Google's password tools.

## Module Checklist

1. Understand basic online safety principles
2. Know how to create strong, unique passwords
3. Recognize common scam tactics (phishing, fake shopping sites, tech support fraud)
4. Configured browser privacy settings
5. Learned to trust instincts when something feels suspicious
6. Developed awareness of social media privacy considerations
7. Understand the importance of keeping software updated

### Remember

Online safety isn't about being fearful—it's about being informed. These skills help you enjoy the Internet's benefits while protecting yourself from potential risks. With practice, safe online habits become as automatic as looking both ways before crossing the street.

## Final Words

Thank you for spending time exploring the Internet with me! You've accomplished something significant today—you've moved from being a newcomer to the digital world to someone who understands how the Internet works and how to navigate it safely.

When we started, the Internet might have seemed like a vast, intimidating space. Now you know it's a powerful tool that connects people, information, and opportunities worldwide. You've discovered that the key to successful Internet use isn't avoiding it out of fear—it's understanding how it works and developing smart habits for using it safely.

### Keep Learning

I encourage you to continue experimenting with the Internet in your daily life. Try using it for projects you're genuinely interested in: researching family history, exploring virtual museums, connecting with old friends, or learning new hobbies

through online tutorials.

Remember that the appendix sections list several resources you can explore at home, so your learning doesn't have to stop here. Most importantly, approach the Internet with the same wisdom you bring to any new tool—with curiosity, caution, and common sense.

The Internet opens doors to endless possibilities for learning, connecting, and growing. Whether you're video-calling grandchildren across the country, researching Arizona's desert wildlife, or discovering new recipes to try, you now have the skills to explore confidently.

Keep exploring, keep asking questions, and most of all, keep learning. The digital world is now yours to discover!



## Appendix A: Recognizing Misinformation and Avoiding Scams

### Recognizing Online Misinformation

**Check the Source** —Look at where the information is coming from. Trusted news sites, universities, or government websites are usually reliable. If you've never heard of the source, be extra cautious.

**Compare with Other Sources** —If something sounds strange or surprising, look it up on a few other trusted websites. If only one site reports it, it might not be true.

**Look at the Date** —Old articles can pop up online and look new. Always check the date—especially with health or news updates.

**Watch for Emotional Headlines** —If the title is shouting at you in all capital letters or makes you feel angry or scared, it might be trying to trick you into clicking.

**Watch for AI-Generated Content** —AI can now create realistic fake text, images, and even videos. If something looks unusual or too perfect, it may have been generated by AI. Be especially cautious with images or videos that seem designed to provoke strong emotions.

**Use Fact-Checking Tools** —Websites like <https://www.snopes.com> or <https://www.factcheck.org> are great for checking if a story is real or made up.

### Avoiding Malware and Phishing Scams

**Don't Click Suspicious Links** —If you get an email or message with a strange link or attachment—especially from someone you don't know—don't click it. It could be a scam.

**Look for the Lock** —Before entering personal info online, check that the website address starts with **https://** and has a little lock symbol next to it.

**Keep Personal Info Private** —Don't send your password, Social Security number, or bank info through email or unfamiliar websites. Real companies won't ask for that over email.

**Keep Software Up to Date** —Let your computer and antivirus software install updates when available. These updates help block new threats.

**Be Cautious with Email** —If an email from a stranger asks you to click a link or "act quickly," it might be a phishing scam. When in doubt—delete it.

**Ignore Scary Pop-Ups** —If a pop-up says, "Your computer has a virus!" or "Click here to claim your prize!"—don't click. These are tricks to get you to download bad software.

### Final Tip

If something online seems off, don't panic. Take a moment, double-check, and ask someone you trust. Staying safe online is a skill—and the more you practice, the easier it gets.

## Appendix B: Useful Websites and Resources

### Getting Started with Browsers and Search

**Google Chrome Browser** —Free web browser known for speed and ease of use. Download from <https://www.google.com/chrome>.

**Mozilla Firefox Browser** —Privacy-focused browser with strong security features (<https://www.mozilla.org/firefox>).

**DuckDuckGo Search** —Search engine that doesn't track your searches or store personal information (<https://duckduckgo.com>).

**Google Scholar** —Find academic papers, court cases, and scholarly research (<https://scholar.google.com>).

### Online Safety and Security Tools

**Have I Been Pwned** —Check if your email address has been involved in a data breach (<https://haveibeenpwned.com>).

**Federal Trade Commission** —Government resource for reporting scams and learning about consumer protection (<https://www.ftc.gov>).

**AARP Fraud Watch** —Resources specifically designed to help older adults avoid scams (<https://www.aarp.org/money/scams-fraud>).

**Norton Safe Web** —Check if a website is safe before visiting (<https://safeweb.norton.com>).

### Educational and Fun Websites

**Coursera** —Free and paid online courses from universities worldwide (<https://www.coursera.org>).

**Khan Academy** —Free educational videos and courses on many subjects (<https://www.khanacademy.org>).

**National Geographic** —Explore nature, science, and world cultures (<https://www.nationalgeographic.com>).

**Smithsonian Virtual Tours** —Visit museums and historical sites from home (<https://www.si.edu/exhibitions/online>).

## Appendix C: Password and Account Security Guidelines

### Creating Strong Passwords

**Length Matters** —Use at least 12 characters. Longer passwords are exponentially harder to crack than shorter ones.

**Mix It Up** —Include uppercase letters, lowercase letters, numbers, and symbols in your passwords.

**Use Passphrases** —Consider using a sentence or phrase that's easy for you to remember but hard for others to guess. Example: "ILove2VisitTucson!" is stronger than "Tr8&mK9."

**Avoid Personal Information** —Don't use your name, birthday, address, or other easily discoverable information.

**Make Each One Unique** —Use a different password for every important account. If one gets compromised, the others stay safe.

### Managing Multiple Passwords

**Password Managers** —Consider using LastPass, Bitwarden, or 1Password to securely store and generate passwords.

**Browser Password Storage** —Chrome, Firefox, and other browsers can save passwords, but dedicated password managers offer better security.

**Two-Factor Authentication** —Enable this extra security step on important accounts like email, banking, and social media when available.

**Regular Updates** —Change passwords immediately if you suspect an account has been compromised, and consider updating important passwords every year.

#### Remember

Being cautious doesn't mean being afraid. Understanding these guidelines helps you use the Internet more effectively and responsibly. Start with securing your most important accounts (email and banking) and gradually improve security on other accounts.

## Appendix D: Local Arizona Resources

## Digital Literacy Support

**Arizona State Library** —Many branches offer free computer classes and one-on-one tech help (<https://azlibrary.gov>).

**Cochise College Continuing Education** —Additional computer and technology classes for community members (<https://www.cochise.edu/academics/c11/index.html>).

**AARP Arizona** —Workshops on technology topics designed for older adults (<https://states.aarp.org/arizona>).

**Senior Planet** —Online and in-person technology classes specifically designed for adults 50+ (<https://seniorplanet.org>).

## Staying Connected in Rural Arizona

**Arizona Broadband Map** —Find internet service providers available in your area (<https://az.broadbandnavigator.com>).

**LifeLine Program** —Government assistance for phone and internet services for qualifying low-income households (<https://www.fcc.gov/lifeline-consumers>).

**Libraries with Free Wi-Fi** —Most Arizona public libraries offer free internet access and computer use.

**Community Centers** —Many local community centers and senior centers provide computer access and basic training.