Information Security Awareness

Recommendations for Travelers (last updated 1/21/15)

Although an afterthought for many planning trips, there are serious concerns you should consider when traveling (including vacations). Because of export controls laws and restrictions, you need to understand your responsibilities.

How you can protect your mobile devices and personal information

- If possible, do not take personal or work-issued electronic devices with you.
- Disposable cell phones are a cheap and temporary solution for traveling.
- If you must take your electronic devices, make sure they are updated with the latest security patches. Leave them off and do not allow them to go into sleep mode (they could still be hacked).
- Update your password before you leave and never reuse passwords.
- Never visit secured sites from a shared computer at a café or library.
- Assume everything you are doing over the Internet, on any device, is being monitored. Even encrypted data can be intercepted and decrypted.
- If you can't keep your device with you, store it in the safe in your hotel room, or with the front desk.
- When you get back from traveling, change your passwords to any accounts that you used while traveling.
- Physically disconnect any integrated laptop microphones, and tape over or disable any integrated laptop cameras.
- Disable all file sharing.
- Turn off all unnecessary services (e.g., Wi-Fi when not in use, Bluetooth, infrared, etc.).
- Backup any data you may have stored on the device.
- Leave unneeded car keys, house keys, smart cards, credit cards, swipe cards, and any other access control devices you may have at home.
- Clean out your purse or wallet of any financial information such as bank account numbers, logins and passwords, any Radio-frequency identification (RFID) cards (credit cards), should be carried inside an RF-shielded cover.
- If you need to send and receive email while traveling, create a temporary "throw away" email account on Gmail, Yahoo, Hotmail, or a similar service before you travel.

For more information, visit the Texas A&M University IT Security page on International travel at: http://security.tamu.edu/protect_my_work/International_Travel.php.

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