**Office of
Information
Technology**

10 Holiday Computer Security Tips

Securing computers during Winter Break

Winter break (as well as other semester breaks) is a time when we vacate campus offices and residence halls, leaving thousands of desktop computers unattended. Please take appropriate measures to keep your computer, your files, and our network safe.

Here you will find some security tips from OIT's Information Security team and the ResNet Office. In addition, the IT support staff for your department, office, or residence may provide security-related services, such as software installation or security patch updates. If so, please follow the security guidelines from your local IT support staff.

For everyone…

1. Identity theft is highest this time of year. Many of these frauds will be perpetrated via phishing emails. Be careful about clicking links in email, and do not disclose any personal or sensitive information over email. Georgia Tech will never ask for account information over e-mail.

2. Sites at Georgia Tech as well as Google, Yahoo, Facebook and others are using Single Sign On and keeping you logged in. This makes it virtually impossible to "log off" when using a web browser. To protect your privacy and keep Georgia Tech safe, always log out of these sites when you are done and always lock your screen.

3. If you own a laptop, please be mindful of where it is at all times. Do not walk away and leave it unattended in a public place, this includes leaving it in a locked automobile.

4. Unless instructed otherwise by your unit's technical staff, please turn off your GT-provided computer during the break. Personal computers (not GT provided) should be turned off and taken home during the break.

5. If you choose to leave your GT-provided computer ON, please make sure that your office/work area is physically locked, all accounts are logged off, and any peripherals (e.g. monitors, printers, scanners) are turned off.

6. If your machines must remain on and you cannot log out of your machine before leaving, make sure that you either enable a screensaver with password protection or LOCK your computer when you leave. Windows users can select a password-protected screensaver from Start -> Control Panel -> Display -> Screensaver.

7. Check with your CSR (technical lead) to make sure that your computer receives security updates and has the necessary security software installed (i.e. antivirus). On personal computers, make sure that you have the GT-provided antivirus software suite (McAfee) installed. You can download it for personal use from: http://www.oit.gatech.edu/software/.

8. For additional protection, you can optionally back up your workstation or server and verify your ability to restore backups prior to leaving campus.

For students who reside on campus…

9. Turn off and unplug any electronics that will not be used during the semester break. Please do not leave your electronics sitting on the floor. Place them on a desk, chair or anything other than on the floor. Some items to remember include your computer, monitor, printer, and gaming devices. Also be sure to turn off any alarm clocks so as not to disturb residents that remain on campus during the break.

10. Check your Georgia Tech email (http://mail.gatech.edu/) before returning to campus. Pay close attention to email you may receive from OIT Communications or ResNet during the break. Important security precautions and procedures will be relayed to residents via email.

Upon your return…

After returning to the office or class from any extended absence, we recommend that you check for updates to your operating system, antivirus software and other applications.