

Steps to Privacy Online

(adapted from *PC Magazine*, November 11, 2001)

1. Don't tell sites anything you don't want them to know.
 - Answer only required questions on registration forms
 - Steer away from answering questions that you wouldn't want in a database
 - Feel free to lie
 - Always opt out of "special offers" or newsletters – this may be a sign that the company may sell your info to others

2. Manage your cookies
 - Cookies can be used to track your behavior and identity online
 - Internet Explorer 5.5: Tools | Internet Options | Security Tab | Internet Icon-Custom Level | Scroll down to Cookies section
 - Disable Cookies – cannot logon to sites automatically, some sites won't let you in
 - Disallow Third-Party Cookies – cookies that are only used by the issuing site will be allowed
 - Allow All Cookies – no privacy
 - Ask Each Time a Cookie is Needed – Try this to see how many cookies are out there!
 - Delete unwanted cookies – Find them in the Windows\Cookies Folder for Internet Explorer

3. Opt out
 - Service offered by the Network Advertising Initiative
 - Will block your computer of cookies from 4 major ad networks
 - www.networkadvertising.org/optout_nonppii.asp

4. Surf anonymously
 - "Anonymizers" send your requests through a proxy server and mask your identity
 - Cookie blocking software allows you to limit cookie activity
 - Use a privacy protection suite – combines personal firewall, cookie handlers, password protectors, and network scanners

5. If you've been the victim of identity theft
 - Report any suspicions to the Federal Trade Commission's Identity Theft Hotline (877-438-4338 or www.consumer.gov/idtheft)
 - Contact the fraud departments for the 3 major credit bureaus:
 - Equifax (800-525-6285)
 - Experian (888-397-3742)
 - Trans Union (800-680-7289)
 - Close credit card or bank accounts and cancel phone or wireless services that may have been compromised
 - Further information available from the Identity Theft Resource Center (www.idtheftcenter.org)
 - Most importantly, contact the police