

Escaping From the Internet

We've all seen the movies where some evil government agency wants to get someone and so they cut off their access to credit cards.

Before the identity theft explosion, it was usually a bad credit report, not bad spies, causing the problem. Now we have discovered that the Chinese government and scammers can activate computer microphones and access your data, spy on you and even talk to you. Not to mention the new world of digital mischief opened up by artificial intelligence.

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Thanks to hacks of financial institutions, social media and the U.S. government, we have entered a new era of digital larceny. Nothing on the internet is safe, and it is not unrealistic to believe that your credit card information is already in the hands of identity thieves.

It is time to think about escaping from the internet.

Before the computer age, people safely did business with green cash and paper checks. They knew their bankers and the people they did business with. Credit cards were often issued by the business selling to cardholders, and general-purpose cards like American Express were hard to get. The vast government and private databases, spawned by computers and the internet, did not exist.

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Nostalgia for the past won't help you, but returning to some of the practices of previous eras can protect you from danger, even if you can't completely escape from the internet. Here are some ideas to consider:

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1. Do all the business you can with green cash. Nobody ever hacked a dollar bill.
2. Pay your bills with paper checks. Your bank is obligated to protect you if someone presents a forged check.
3. Develop personal relationships at your bank and where you shop. If you have a problem, you will be heard because they know you.
4. If you shop on the internet, avoid credit cards and instead use debit cards tied to a special bank account with limited funds. You can count on that card number being stolen, and you will probably get the money back, but only a limited amount of your money and information will be at risk.
5. Do not let anyone auto draft your accounts. It is just a matter of time until your account will be compromised.
6. Do not avail yourself of online banking which allows you to send funds from your accounts electronically. Hackers can do the same, and your bank may not be liable to repay you.
7. Don't use social media, but if you must, do not give out personal information like birth dates unless you want to "friend" a hacker. Also, block the camera on your computer so hackers cannot look in at you.
8. Consider using identity protection services and put a freeze on credit inquiries with the credit bureaus.

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As Solomon said:

"How useless to spread a net in full view of all the birds!" (Prov. 1:17). Now that you can clearly see the trap set for

you by the internet, you can escape.

Ron Allen is a Christian businessman who is active in ministries spreading a message of reconciliation to God, to men and between believers. He is the founder of American Wake Up Call.