

Media Release



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Safety first with computer gifts

The Australian High Tech Crime Centre (AHTCC) has prepared a list of helpful hints for people planning to give computer products as Christmas gifts

Director of the AHTCC, Federal Agent Kevin Zuccato, said many people see Christmas as a good time to upgrade old computer products but forget to use correct security measures to ensure that their information and their families are kept safe and secure.

“There are some simple things that you can do to ensure that your computer and information is kept safe,” Federal Agent Zuccato said.

“In the physical world you wouldn’t give your credit card or other financial information to someone you didn’t know or trust. When you are online, apply the same logic.

“Similarly, there are many scams that are distributed by email and instant messaging services. If you receive messages telling of lottery wins, inheritances and offers to work from home, do not respond to them,” he said.

Federal Agent Zuccato explained that children should also be reminded about computer safety.

“Unfortunately, there are people online that prey on children. The best defence against this is to supervise children when they are accessing the Internet, and to be aware of what services they are using.

“Although there are software packages that can assist in providing a safe environment online for children, they are not an absolute solution,” he said.

“Finally, when using technology you need to make sensible judgments regarding the activities you undertake. Think of a real-world analogy for what you are doing. If you wouldn’t do it in the physical world, don’t do it online.

Some tips when using a computer this Christmas period:

- Protect your family, money and privacy against:
 - Viruses – install strong anti-virus software and ensure the virus definitions are updated regularly.
 - Hackers – consider installing a firewall and anti-sypware software.
 - Spam – use a filter on your email.
 - Scams – avoid fake websites and only shop online with reputable business – not someone pretending to be a well known company. Never click a link in an email to access ogranisations – always type the address for the site directly into your web browser.
 - Lotteries – if it looks too good to be true, it probably is.
 - Online predators and offensive sites – set ground rules for children when they’re online.

Parents can find out more information on how to protect children online from the NetAlert web site at: www.netalert.net.au and on the Virtual Global Taskforce website at www.virtualglobaltaskforce.com.

For further information about the Australian High Tech Crime Centre and for information about reporting a high tech crime, visit www.ahtcc.gov.au.

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