

# CATCHING ONLINE SHENANIGANS

## A Friendly Guide



Hello, digital explorer! Ready to become a scam-spotting superhero? Well, you're in luck, because the digital universe, while amazing, is also peppered with some sneaky cyber tricksters. But worry not! I'm here to arm you with some superpowers (aka knowledge) to keep those baddies at bay.

### 1. Listen to That Inner Whisper

You know that feeling when something just doesn't sit right? Maybe it's an email claiming you've won a contest you never entered (congrats, by the way?) or a pop-up that promises a lifetime supply of pizza for clicking a link (if only, right?). If it smells fishy, it's probably not freshly baked cookies. Trust that gut of yours—it's smarter than you might think!

### 2. The Magic 'S' and the Loyal Padlock

Are you venturing to share some personal info or splurging on that must-have gadget online? Pause and glance at the website's URL. Spot a "https" instead of a plain old "http"? That 's' is your new best friend—it means the website has a secret handshake (aka encryption) that keeps your data safe. And the padlock icon? That's the bouncer, ensuring your details stay VIP.

### 3. Beware the Digital Cold Call

Have you ever got a message or an email out of the blue, perhaps from the Queen of a far-off land offering you her kingdom? Or maybe a 'bank' email that smells more like a fish market? These cyber surprisers love a good uninvited pop-in. So, if you weren't expecting it, maybe don't invite them in for tea.

### 4. The Look Before You Leap Rule

Phishing—no, it's not a relaxing day by the lake but something much more sinister. Cyber crooks love dressing up as your bank, your favorite online store, or even your buddy to get you to click on dodgy links. Hover over that link like it's the last piece of cheesecake. Does the URL look like it's wearing a fake mustache? Best not to take a bite.

### 5. Keep Your Cyber Shields Up

Imagine if your door could automatically strengthen itself against burglars every time they invented a new way to pick locks. Well, updating your software does precisely that against virtual villains. Don't let them sneak in through a window you forgot to close!

### 6. Passwords: The Secret Handshakes of the Internet

If your password is "password123," it's time for a spy movie makeover. Think more "encrypted message hidden in a painting" and less "note pinned to the front door." Use strong, unique passwords that even a mind reader couldn't guess. And a password manager? That's your trusty sidekick in this adventure.

### 7. Your Personal Info: The Crown Jewels

Imagine your personal information as the crown jewels of an ancient kingdom. You wouldn't just hand them out to anyone who asks, right? Guard them with your life! Well, maybe not that extreme, but be cautious about where and to whom you're giving your digital treasures.

### Taking the Helm

Stepping into the vast sea of the internet doesn't have to feel like navigating a ship through stormy waters. With these handy tips and a bit of trust in your intuition, you're well on your way to dodging those pesky cyber-scallywags. Remember, if something seems off, better to steer clear and sail another day. Here's to safe digital travels, my friend! **Stay savvy, stay scam-free.**