



Suggestions for Signing up for Online Accounts

The difference in online identities and off line identities is problematic. (see "Be Somebody Else But Be Yourself At All Times: Degrees Of Identity Deception In Chatrooms", <http://www.once.uclan.ac.uk/idic.htm>).

In order to be able to have online accounts and be safe online at the same time, here are a few suggestions for both adults and youth about signing up for online accounts.

Use these tips to **construct an online identity** and use it consistently! (Then you don't have to make something different up every time.)

1. First and Last Name

- Avoid using your last name when ever possible. Assuming an online name can be as easy as using your first name twice or picking a fictional name. (i.e. Merlyn Merlyn, Bev Bev or Bugs Bunny).

2. Email address

- Set up an email address just for your online accounts. It can be either web-based, like hotmail or gmail, or set up an extra account with your internet service provider or network technician. This email should not have any identifying information. (I.e. nothere@shaw.ca, nonone@hotmail.com or blahblah@gmail.com) This is your junk email account. Use it to sign up for **all** of your online accounts and places where they require an email address but you don't want to clutter up your personal or work email address.

3. Gender

- If you have to pick a gender be consistent. (I choose my physical one).

4. Usernames and passwords

- Usernames, identities, and passwords should include numbers as well as letters and should be **different for all your online accounts**. Yes, it is difficult, if not impossible to remember all the different accounts and numbers we need to but this can be handled a few different ways;
 - i. Keep list on paper in your desk, purse or briefcase.
 - ii. Or you can use software that will store your information securely!
 1. Here is a free Windows program click here - <https://sourceforge.net/projects/passwordsafe/>
 2. For a Mac version, look for Password Retriever 5.1.5 here - <http://www.koingosw.com/products/passwordretriever.php>.

3. YAPS, a spiffly Palm OS version that I have on my handheld
- <http://www.mssoftware.ch/yaps.html> .

5. **Security question**

- Try not to rely on these questions too much but again, be consistent. If you're going to use the "pet's name" question, maybe use your first pet or your parent's pet, but not your current pet's name.

6. **Birthdays**

- Use the year you were born, **never your actual birth day**. This date is a vital piece of personal information. Use January 1st, use Canada Day, use your favourite day of the year but choose something that's not your real birth date. **Always use the real year you were born** however.

7. **Postal code**

- This is another big information give away. Look here (<http://www.canadapost.ca/tools/pcl/bin/range-e.asp>) and put in your postal code to see how it can identify the street where you live. Instead of your home postal code, pick the postal code of a public building (library, police station, school, or city hall) from your community. That way you can't be identified. Pick a dummy postal and use it consistently!

We hope these tips help with your online safety.
Be sure to visit our website at www.safeonlineoutreach.com !!