



Technology Safety

Technology is a wonderful thing. Most people don't use technology as a form of control, but sometimes abusers use technology to monitor their partners. Here are some things to keep in mind if you believe your partner may be trying to control or spy on you with technology. *Adapted from wmwcare.org, loveisrespect.org and gmdnp.org*

Safe Computer Use

If an abuser has access to your computer, they can monitor what you do by installing programs that keep a record of everything that happens on the computer. It may be safest to use a computer at a public library, community center or Internet café when you need to do something you don't want your partner to find out about. An easy way to increase your privacy is to always empty the "Recycle" or "Trash Bin" of any documents before shutting down the computer. Make this a regular routine so it is not an unusual action that may trigger suspicion.

Safe Web Browsing

Your web browser keeps a record of every webpage that you visit. While this cannot be completely erased from your computer, clearing your browser's "history" is an easy way to increase your privacy.

Safe E-mail

If an abuser has access to your e-mail account, they may be able to read your e-mail. If you believe your account is not secure, get a new, free e-mail address at hotmail.com, yahoo.com or other free e-mail sites. Only use this e-mail address at public computers if you don't want your partner to know you have it. Make sure the e-mail address does not contain information that may identify you; for example, use bluekitten@hotmail.com rather than YourName@hotmail.com. Make it a habit to delete e-mails from the "Send" or "Outbox" in addition to your "Inbox" and then also delete the e-mails from the "Deleted Items" folder.

Safe Calling

Cell phone usage can be easily monitored. Your partner may be able to find out who you've called and who has called you by checking your phone bill. If you are concerned about your safety, keep change for a pay phone. You can also contact a local hotline to find out about donation programs that provide new cell phones

and/or prepaid phone cards to victims of abuse and stalking. If there is a baby monitor in the house, make sure to turn it off when you're having a conversation you don't want others to overhear.

Safety with Facebook and MySpace

Social networking sites, like Facebook and MySpace, are very easy ways for someone to get information about you, for example by monitoring who sends you messages and who your friends are. Use the privacy controls offered by these sites to restrict access to your page.

Safe Passwords

Do not store your passwords, even if your browser has this capability. Change your passwords often, and use different passwords for different sites and accounts. Do not use obvious passwords, such as your birthday or your pet's name. Use passwords that include both letters and numbers so that they are harder for someone to guess.

Safe Online Information

Some court systems are placing court records online that may contain personal information. You may request that the court keep your records confidential if you feel the information may put you in danger. Call the courthouse where you are involved in litigation to make this request. Make sure your phone number and address are unlisted by calling your telephone company. Do a Google search on yourself, by searching "Your Full Name" in parentheses. See what comes up, and take steps to change any pages that provide private information.

Safe Mailing

Get a private mailbox and don't give out your real address. When asked by businesses, doctors and others for your address, have a private mailbox address or a safer address to give them. Try to keep your true residential address out of national databases.