

10 simple tips to keep your instant messages (IM) safe

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Communication using an instant messaging program (such as Yahoo Messenger, MSM, Google Talk, .) has become more and more popular and is one of the privacy secrets for information rather than email. But any way of communicating online, there are loopholes and the following are some of the risks you should avoid :

- 1. Be careful when creating a username .** Any IM program requires you to create a name to use and this name is similar to an email address. This name should not suggest or provide any information about who uses them.
- 2. Create a barrier against unwanted messages .** Do not list your username or email address in public places (such as Internet directories or online community profiles) and should not be given to strangers.



Source: Spikedeffect Some IM services connect your username to your email address when you register. This can make your email address become popular and overwhelmed by spam (spam) and fake attacks.

- 3. Never provide sensitive personal information** (such as payment card numbers or passwords) in an IM

conversation.

4. Contact only those who are on your contact list or close friends .

5. If you decide to meet an unknown person who only contacts via IM, be prepared to be safe before that meeting. For example, don't meet that person alone (ask your friend or relative), and always meet in public places (like a café).

6. Never open photos, download files or click links from strangers' messages . If the sender is an acquaintance, confirm the message (or attachment) from the sender to see if the person sent it correctly. If not, ignore that message and close it.

7. Don't send private and personal instant messages at work . Your colleague may accidentally "see" those messages.

8. If you use a public computer, do not select the feature that allows automatic access . The following computer users can fully view and use the username you used by the self-save and access feature.

9. If you have children, always check and limit their use of IM . There is an easy tool to do this is Windows Live OneCare Family Safety.

10. When you're not ready to receive the message, keep in mind when displaying that information to other people on the list. For example, you might not want anyone else on your list to know you ' *Out for lunch!* '

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