BROWN

Protect Laptops, Mobile Devices & Flash Drives

Stephanie Obodda - 2022-05-25 - Comments (0) - Physical Security

Protecting your laptop, small mobile devices, and your even smaller thumbdrives / smart cards / memory sticks from theft is much easier than trying to recover any of them later. A few simple steps can save you lost files, time, maybe even your identity or job.

Deter

- **Keep it close.** It's always best to keep your laptop within reach and your small devices in a safe place right on your person whenever possible.
- **Lock it down.** This includes your login as well as the physical machine.
  - Phones and tablets: We've shared some of our favorite phone security tips for both Android and iOS:
    - Secure Your iPhone or iPad
    - Secure Your Android
  - Computers: To lockdown your login, make sure that when you walk away from your laptop, you lock the screen.
    - For Windows machines, press the Windows key (icon of Windows logo) plus the "L" key.
    - For Apple laptops, configure your Security & Privacy settings so that a login password is required immediately after sleep or a screen saver begins, then when you walk away from your laptop, click on the Sleep option in the Apple menu.
    - It's also a good idea to set the display/power option to put the computer to sleep when it has been idle for a certain length of time, which should be dependent upon what is stored or can be accessed from your machine. Those with sensitive information should have a very short idle period such as one minute, for example.
  - For physical security, use a cable lock, preferably one with an alarm. For serious lock-downs, visit Tryten Technologies, offering a variety of strategies to secure your laptops as well as desktops, tablets and external drives (including laptop lockers).
- **Lock your room** when you leave to protect your valuables, even if it's for a short time.
- **Secure your flash drive**. Encrypt its contents. You can purchase Data Traveler Vaults from Kingston, as an example.

- **Be safe when traveling.** Is your laptop ready for wireless in the wild? Review Prepare Your Laptop for Traveling before you go.

Document

- **Make a record of key information.** Document your laptop's serial number, **MAC addresses** (local area connection as well wireless) and other vitals. In the event of a theft, these will be helpful for public safety/police reports. Not sure how to capture your MAC addresses? You can find instructions here.
- **Print out and store the document in a safe place**. You may also want a paper record of key contact names and numbers should you lose a cell phone.

Detect

- **Locate/Lock it:** Install a tracking program like **Absolute's Laptop Protection service** , which provides one year of basic coverage for $19.99 (three for $39.99). And don't forget about your smartphone. Track down a lost or stolen device by installing a security app. Check your device's app store for specifics.
- **Mark it:** Have the Department of Public Safety engrave and register it. Details on this free service on DPS's Operation Identification web page.
- **If missing, report it:** If your laptop is stolen, contact DPS immediately.

Bottom Line

- **Common Sense:** Keep your eyes open and your wits about you, if you want to keep your laptop, mobile device or memory cards.