

Consumer Corner

Tips For Protecting Laptops From Thieves

(NAPS)—Maybe you've taken steps to secure the *data* on your laptop, but what about the laptop itself? Many people think their laptop won't be stolen—at least not until they find the trunk of their car broken into, notice that their laptop isn't waiting at the other side of airport security, or get a refill at the local java joint only to turn around and find their laptop missing.

OnGuardOnline, a Web site managed by the federal government that is devoted to computer security, protecting personal information and guarding against Internet fraud, suggests keeping these tips in mind when you take your laptop out and about:

- Treat your laptop like cash. If you had money sitting out in a public place, would you turn your back on it—even for just a minute?
- Keep it locked. Use a laptop security cable. Attach it to something immovable or to a heavy piece of furniture that's difficult to move.
- Keep it off the floor. Avoid putting your laptop on the floor in public. If you must put it down, place it between your feet or up against your leg, so that you're aware of it.
- Keep your passwords elsewhere. Leaving passwords in a laptop carrying case or on your laptop is like leaving the keys in your car.
- Mind the bag. Carrying a computer case may advertise what's inside. Consider using a suitcase, a padded briefcase or a backpack instead.
- Get it out of the car. Parked cars are a favorite target of laptop



Never Leave It Alone—Treating your laptop like cash could keep it from being stolen.

thieves. If you must leave your laptop behind, keep it out of sight.

- Pay attention in airports. Keep your eye on your laptop as you go through security. Hold onto it until the person in front of you has gone through the metal detector and keep an eye out when it emerges on the other side of the screener.

- Be vigilant in hotels. If you must leave your laptop behind, secure it in your room safe if there is one. Or, if you're using a security cable to lock down your laptop, consider hanging a "do not disturb" sign on your door.

- Use bells and whistles. Some laptop alarms sound when there's unexpected motion or when the computer moves outside a specified range around you. Or consider a kind of "lo-jack" for your laptop: a program that reports the location of your stolen laptop once it's connected to the Internet.

Visit OnGuardOnline.gov for more tips and information.

Did You Know?

You can protect your laptop from thieves by treating it like cash and never turning your back on it in public. For more tips, visit OnGuardOnline.gov, a Web site managed by the federal government that is devoted to computer security, protecting personal information and guarding against Internet fraud.

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