

Protect your social self



If you're locked out of your social media account:

- If you receive an email saying your social media account has been compromised, don't click on it. Visit your account directly to check.
- If you can't log in to your social media account, first purchase or update your device's anti-virus software, run a scan, and delete any malware it finds.
- Next, connect to the internet using the network and the device you normally use.
- Go to the social media platform's login screen. Enter your email address or phone and send a recovery code to it. If you receive the code, re-set your password.
- If not, visit the social media platform's Help Center and follow instructions on getting your account back. Also send a message to the platform's customer support, which is usually <support@companyname.com>. This whole process usually relies on automation to help you, not people, and takes time.
- If you use the same password on any other accounts, particularly your bank account and email, change them immediately.
- *The Washington Post* says the website *hacked.com* can help users recover hijacked social media accounts, though at a price.

When you get your account back, or have to set up a new one:

- Create a new password phrase, at least 12 characters long and unique to that account. Better yet: purchase, install, and use password manager software on all your devices.
- Revisit your privacy settings on the social media site and understand your choices.
- Set up multi-factor authentication (which requires that a code be sent to you when you log in in addition to entering a password to prove it's really you). Have the code sent to your email address.
- Never provide your username and password in an email response or send a six-digit code number that appears on your phone to a stranger who asks for it.
- If you're using a device that's not yours (for example, a work computer), log out before you leave.
- Never surf using public Wi-Fi, even at reputable places like Starbucks.
- Limit personal information you post on social media like your address, pet's name, and birthdays.
- Never use a public computer or friend's device to log in to personal accounts.

