# Simple tips to avoid getting hacked

With all the craze and news about “big brother” watching, stores being hacked and now even the stories with the iCloud being open the question I always get is “how do I make myself safe”.

There's probably no way to completely avoid the NSA if they've got you in their sights, but fortunately, there are a number of simple things you can do right now to better protect yourself against hackers and unwanted surveillance. Here are just a few that I would like to share with you now:

* When companies find an issue with their software that hackers can use they typically send out updates that appear as either a pop up or download prompts. Be careful but most of the time these are safe and are meant to protect you.
* Two factor Authentication – we have this now on our online banking. If you login from a unknown device it will prompt you to either send you an email, text message or phone call. This 2 step process. Once login, and then prompt for device.
* This one might sound a bit extreme but tape over your webcam on your laptop or computer if you aren’t using it. Sophisticated hackers can activate it remotely and give them a virtual peephole into your home.
* I’ve said it before but because what you are surfing for on the web. There are a lot of site out there that make it seem legit or even real but look for the signs. Does the web address have an HTTPS or if you are ordering something do you have the secure logo and know the site. Often I tell people if they are going to order for the first time look for a phone number. Call it. If they answer and are indeed the company.
* And always Email. NEVER click on a link or give out information over email that can be used. Make sure it’s from a reliable source.

Lastly I want to chat about an upcoming issue with home users and businesses that are getting calls from “Microsoft” or “Symantec” saying that they found a virus on your computer or that your computer is compromised. Please, please don’t allow them into your computer. They would never call you and offer these services. There are too many of these scams around. If you think this seems legit them I would ask for a call back number and even call a friend or local PC shop to make sure it’s good before you allow anyone to connect to your computer.

With the way technology is changing with payments, online apps, smartphones, etc. Please keep in mind these items are supposed to make your life easier but also be aware that with technology always comes the ability of people (hackers) getting in too. Just be aware. And knowing is half the battle.