Here are some tips on how to be Cyber Smart when shopping online during this holiday season.

**Click Cautiously**

Cyber criminals can attack your computer through links and email attachments. Don't click on anything from unknown senders and when receiving e-greeting cards, coupons, or other mail from friends and family, verify that they've sent it before opening!

**Review New Websites Before Shopping**

It's easy for cyber criminals to create fake online stores with too good to be true deals in order to obtain your credit card information. Do a web search and check for reviews for new online stores. Remember, secure websites are indicated with a lock symbol in the browser window and/or a “https” in the URL.

**Watch Out For Fake Shipping Notices**

Phishing attacks can also come through fake shipping notices. Official shipping notices from carriers such as FedEx and UPS come with tracking numbers that you can enter into the website instead of clicking on links within the email.

**Restrict Your Exposure To Credit Card Theft**

If possible, use only one credit card with little or no balance for all your online purchases. At the end, you’ll only have one credit card balance to pay off and only one card will be exposed.

**Use Different E-mail Accounts**

Your emails and passwords for your bank accounts should be different from your personal shopping accounts. Using a variety of logins ensures that if one is compromised, all won’t be in jeopardy. Also, avoid using your Hostos email address.

**Stay Away From Pop-Ups**

Don’t click on pop-ups, no matter how rewarding or authentic they may seem. Turn on the option for blocking pop-ups on your browser. If you run into a pop-up, don’t click the “Ok/Cancel” buttons. Instead, close the window by clicking the “x” in the top right corner or press “Alt + F4” on a PC or “Command + W” on a Mac.

**Back Up Your Data Often**

In the event of a ransomware attack, you will need to restore your computer files from a back-up that is not connected to your computer such as an external hard drive.

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**Phishing** - An attempt to obtain personal, financial or other confidential information from someone, usually through an email that appears to be from a legitimate source but contains a link to a fake or replicated website.

**Ransomware** - A type of malicious software designed to block access to a computer system until a sum of money is paid to the hacker.

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For more information on how to stay Cyber Smart, visit, www.Hostos.cuny.edu/IT