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AARP Gives Consumers Tools to Test Cyber Security during Awareness Month

Survey Indicates Many are Leaving Themselves Vulnerable

WASHINGTON, D.C. — AARP today announced free online resources from the **AARP Fraud Watch Network** (FWN) are now available to consumers who would like to test cyber security vulnerability for themselves or family members during the month of October, designated as national **Cyber Security Awareness Month**. A cyber security survey conducted by the FWN indicates a high incidence of risky online behaviors with bank and credit card accounts, smartphones and public Wi-Fi use.

“AARP supports the Department of Homeland Security’s goal of raising awareness about cybersecurity and increasing the resiliency of the nation in the event of a cyber incident,” said Nancy LeaMond, Chief Advocacy & Engagement Officer, AARP. “The Fraud Watch Network’s recent survey verifies that too many Americans are neglecting cyber security and should take measures to decrease their susceptibility to malicious cyber activity.”

The Fraud Watch Network provides free scam alerts, fraud tips and educational content. Among its evaluative tools which help users test their cyber security awareness are:

- An online **Wi-Fi Security Quiz**, which allows users to determine whether they are leaving their portable devices vulnerable to hackers.
- A fun **“Catch the Con” video quiz**, designed by AARP Fraud Watch Network Ambassador and renowned security expert Frank Abagnale, which helps you learn about con artists’ favorite tactics.

Specifics of the FWN’s 2015 cyber security **survey** revealing a high incidence of risky online behaviors include:

- Considerably more than half of those surveyed said they have not set up online access to monitor their bank accounts (61%) and credit card accounts (71%).
- More than a quarter of respondents (27%) said they have used unsecure public Wi-Fi networks to do banking or make credit card purchases.
- One of four smartphone users (26%) has not programmed the phone with a passcode.

Because ubiquitous free public Wi-Fi networks can be particularly hazardous environments for cyber scams, AARP has launched a “Watch Your Wi-Fi” campaign. Visit www.aarp.org/WatchYourWiFi to learn about “The Four Things Never to Do on Public Wi-Fi,” along with a description of the cyber con artists’ favorite techniques, including the “Man in the Middle Attack” and the “Evil Twin Attack.”

In addition to this month’s Cyber Security Awareness designation, an article in the current issue of *The AARP Bulletin*, **“Beware Fall Scams,”** notes that October is a time when certain seasonal fraud schemes are prevalent.

And while evaluating and enhancing your cyber security protections and activities is vital, experts also remind you to be mindful of certain *low-tech* behaviors which can put you at risk for identity theft. These include: using an unlocked mailbox, failing to shred important documents and credit cards, and leaving valuable papers, computers or other portable devices in your car.

For more information on identity theft scams – high-tech and low-tech – visit www.aarp.org/FraudWatchNetwork.

***Survey Methodology:** Alan Newman Research completed a total of 800 interviews (559 by landline and 241 by cell phone). Respondents were screened for being age 18 or older and accessing the internet at least a couple of times per month. A total of 11,700 records were dialed. The total sample of 800 respondents yields a maximum statistical error of $\pm 3.5\%$ at the 95% level of confidence. This means that in 95 out of 100 samples of this size, the results obtained in the sample would be within ± 3.5 percentage points of the results obtained had everyone in the population been interviewed. Interviews took place April 2 through April 11, 2015.*

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About AARP:

AARP is a nonprofit, nonpartisan organization, with a membership of nearly 38 million, that helps people turn their goals and dreams into real possibilities, strengthens communities and fights for the issues that matter most to families such as healthcare, employment and income security, retirement planning, affordable utilities

and protection from financial abuse. We advocate for individuals in the marketplace by selecting products and services of high quality and value to carry the AARP name as well as help our members obtain discounts on a wide range of products, travel, and services. A trusted source for lifestyle tips, news and educational information, AARP produces AARP The Magazine, the world's largest circulation magazine; AARP Bulletin; www.aarp.org; AARP TV & Radio; AARP Books; and AARP en Español, a Spanish-language website addressing the interests and needs of Hispanics. AARP does not endorse candidates for public office or make contributions to political campaigns or candidates. The AARP Foundation is an affiliated charity that provides security, protection, and empowerment to older persons in need with support from thousands of volunteers, donors, and sponsors. AARP has staffed offices in all 50 states, the District of Columbia, Puerto Rico, and the U.S. Virgin Islands. Learn more at www.aarp.org.

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Additional assets available online: **Video (1)**