



NEW YORK STATE SENATOR

Michael F. Nozzolio

What is Cyber Security and How Does It Affect You?

MICHAEL F. NOZZOLIO June 29, 2015



Each day before leaving our homes, we protect the property within. By locking our doors, closing our windows, or activating our security systems, we go to great lengths to ensure that our homes have the necessary safeguards in place to thwart potential intruders and those who may try to steal our personal and precious belongings.

When it comes to our confidential personal information, however, many of us fail to realize that this information is readily available and able to be hacked at a moment's notice. Just like the locks on our homes protect the very livelihood we hold dear, we must take decisive action to protect ourselves and our personal information from the burdensome ramifications of a cyber attack. Although many of us are aware of the dangers that could result from sharing information with others, we often lack the knowledge that we need to protect ourselves and our families.

In this fast-paced, digital age, nearly everything we do is connected to a computer and the internet, including our communications, our entertainment, transportation, shopping, banking, and even our medical histories and prescriptions. Through technological advances, we are able to send and receive more information than ever before - sometimes - in mere seconds. The amount of information about us that is available online grows each day as our families, friends, employers, banks, doctors, schools and other contacts depend on electronic data. Access to this abundance of information requires great responsibility on our part as consumers and has focused new importance on the field of Cyber Security.

Cyber Security is the practice of protecting our electronic data by preventing, detecting, and responding to cyber attacks. With each convenience that technology has brought into our lives, the level of inconvenience has also been elevated by making it easier for hackers to obtain our personal and private records, and in turn, making it more difficult for us to prevent it from occurring. Simply withdrawing money from an ATM, electronically filing our taxes, or refilling a prescription online can put us at risk for being hacked. With several recent and high profile examples of cyber attacks, we have all become more aware of this growing problem and, unfortunately, become either a victim or know someone who has experienced this rising epidemic of crime.

In response to the severity of this issue, I recently helped to facilitate a joint Legislative hearing on Cyber Security. The May 20th hearing thoroughly examined what our State is doing to prevent cyber attacks that could affect our security, our economy, and our government. In addition to our recent public hearing, I have co-authored several pieces of legislation aimed at combating cyber crime and enhancing cyber security measures in a variety of areas.

This column begins a three-part series on cyber security, focusing on how this issue affects our daily lives, our personal confidential information as well as the economy of our Nation and our National Security. We will discuss in future columns, how foreign hackers, who may even be sanctioned by their governments, make us dangerously vulnerable personally and as a Nation.

###