American Bar Association
Commission on Domestic Violence

WARNING

Taking all of the actions on this page may not prevent an abuser from discovering your email and internet activity. The safest way to find information on the internet is to go to a safer computer. Suggestions are: a local library, a friend's house or your workplace. Other safety suggestions: change your password often, do not pick obvious words or numbers for your password, and pick a combination of letters and numbers for your password.

HOW AN ABUSER CAN DISCOVER YOUR INTERNET ACTIVITIES

email: if an abuser has access to your email account, he or she may be able to read your incoming and outgoing mail. if you believe your account is secure, make sure you choose a password he or she will not be able to guess.

If an abuser sends you threatening or harassing email messages, they may be printed and saved as evidence of this abuse. Additionally, the messages may constitute a federal offense. For more information on this issue, contact your local United States Attorney's Office.

history / cache file: if an abuser knows how to read your computer's history or cache file (automatically saved web pages and graphics), he or she may be able to see information you have viewed recently on the internet.

You can clear your history or empty your cache file in your browser's settings.*

- **Netscape:**
  Pulldown Edit menu, select Preferences. Click on Navigator on choose 'Clear History'. Click on Advanced then select Cache. Click on "Clear Disk Cache".

  On older versions of Netscape: Pulldown Options menu. Select Network Options, Select Cache. Click on "Clear Disk Cache".

- **Internet Explorer:**
  Pull down Tools menu, select Internet Options. On General page, under Temporary Internet Files, click on "Delete Files." If asked, check the box to delete all offline content. Still within the Temporary Internet Files section, click on Settings. (This next step may make it harder to navigate pages where you'd like your information to be remembered, but these remaining cookies do show website pages you have visited. Therefore, use your own judgment as to whether or not to take this next step). Click on "View Files." Manually highlight all the files (cookies) shown, then hit Delete. Close that window, then on General page under History section, click on "Clear History."

- **Safari**
  To Clear History: Pull down the History menu, select Clear History.
  To Empty Cache: Pull down the Safari menu, select Empty Cache. A dialog box pops up

verifying if   you want to complete this procedure. Select Empty.
- **AOL:**
  Pulldown Members menu, select Preferences. Click on WWW icon. Then select Advanced. Purge Cache.

Additionally, a victim needs to make sure that the "Use Inline Autocomplete" box is NOT checked. This function will complete a partial web address while typing a location in the address bar at the top of the browser.

If you are using Internet Explorer, this box can be found on the MS Internet Explorer Page by clicking on "Tools" at the top of the screen, then "Internet Options," and then the "Advanced" tab. About halfway down there is a "Use inline AutoComplete" box that can be checked and unchecked by clicking on it. Uncheck the box to disable the feature that automatically completes an internet address when you start typing in the internet address box.

* This information may not completely hide your tracks. Many browser types have features that display recently visited sites. The safest way to find information on the internet, would be at a local library, a friend's house, or at work.

Contact information:
ABA Commission on Domestic Violence
740 15th Street, NW, 9th Floor
Washington, DC, 20005-1022
http://www.abanet.org/domviol/internet.html

Copyright 2004 American Bar Association.

Reprinted with permission from the American Bar Association Commission on Domestic Violence, February 19, 2004.