

When people think about cybersecurity, they often picture hackers, malware, or phishing attacks. When they think about privacy, they think about protecting personal information. While these topics may seem different, they are closely connected and work together to safeguard the information we rely on every day.

Cybersecurity focuses on protecting systems, devices, and data from unauthorized access, attacks, and losses. Privacy focuses on ensuring personal information is collected, used, shared, and retained appropriately. Simply put, cybersecurity helps protect information, while privacy determines how that information should be handled.

Why the Connection Matters

Every day, members of the College community handle information that may include personal, financial, academic, or health-related data. A cybersecurity incident, such as a phishing attack, compromised account, or lost device, can quickly become a privacy incident if personal information is exposed, altered, or accessed without authorization. Protecting information requires both strong security controls and responsible data handling practices.

Privacy and Cybersecurity in Action

Consider these common scenarios:

- A phishing email tricks someone into disclosing their login credentials.
- A laptop containing sensitive information is lost or stolen.
- Personal information is accidentally sent to the wrong recipient.
- An unapproved application is used to store or share College data.

In each case, a security weakness can result in a privacy risk.

Be Alert

- Think before clicking links, opening attachments, or scanning QR codes.
- Verify unusual requests involving sensitive information.

Protect Access

- Use strong, unique passwords.
- Enable Multi-Factor Authentication (MFA) whenever available.

Handle Information Responsibly

- Access only the information you need.
- Share personal information only when there is a legitimate business need or authorized purpose.

Secure Your Devices

- Lock your screen when away from your workstation.
- Keep software and devices updated.
- Store information only in approved College systems.

Report Concerns Promptly

- Immediately report suspicious emails, lost devices, or potential privacy incidents.
- Early reporting helps limit potential harm and support effective response efforts.

Safe Use of AI

As AI tools become more common in our work and studies, privacy and cybersecurity remain essential considerations. Before entering information into an AI tool, ensure it is approved for use and do not share confidential, personal, or sensitive information unless authorized to do so. The safe and responsible use of AI is another focus area of this year's awareness campaign.

Remember: Cybersecurity protects data. Privacy protects people. When we follow secure practices and respect privacy obligations, we help build a safer digital environment for everyone at Algonquin College. Privacy and cybersecurity are everyone's responsibility. Every click, every email, and every decision can make a difference.

We’re always here to answer any questions you might have about cyber security and keeping your data safe. You can reach out to ITS Client Care with your questions at 613-727-4723 ext. 5555 or at 5555@algonquincollege.com.