

Dear Einstein Community,

Laptop computers are a prime target for theft from your office, your home, at airports, hotels, and subway stations. They are small, can be carried away without attracting attention, and can be easily sold. If your laptop is stolen or lost you can become a victim of identity theft. Below are some suggestions to protect your devices and information.

Protection Of Laptops

The basic rule for protecting your laptop is to treat it like your wallet or purse. Even in your office, unless it is a controlled secure area, it is advisable to keep your laptop in a locked drawer or cabinet when not in use. Here is a summary of some basic precautions you should take:

- Protect your system by requiring a password at sign-on.
- Back-up important information to a USB or external drive.
- Safe keep your laptop. The distinctive size and shape of a laptop computer make it an easily spotted target for thieves. Carry it in a briefcase or other enclosed bag.
- Never leave a laptop unattended. If you set it down while checking in at the airport counter or hotel registration desk, lean it against your leg so that you can feel its presence, or hold it between your feet.
- If you must leave, do not leave your electronic device running.
- When going through the airport security check, do not place your laptop on the conveyor belt until you are sure no one in front of you is being delayed. If you are delayed while passing through the checkpoint, keep your eye on your device.
- When traveling via public transportation, do not place the laptop (or other valuables) in checked baggage.

Technology For Protecting Information On Your Laptop

Due to the high risk and cost of theft, many products have been developed to protect the security of information in your electronic devices. The following general types of products are now available.

- Encryption software. Storing all data files in encrypted form will prevent disclosure of the data even if your computer is stolen.
- Software that hides information on your hard drive making it difficult to be located.
- Various locks, keys, and biometric identification devices designed to prevent anyone but you from using the computer, and perhaps to alert you to any unauthorized attempt to use your computer.
- Tracers that identify the location of a stolen laptop. When the stolen laptop is linked to the Internet, it transmits a signal to a monitoring station that identifies the user's telephone number or Internet account.
- Proximity alarms that go off if the laptop gets too far away from its owner or user.

What To Do If Your Laptop Is Stolen

- Immediately file a report with the Security Department located in Forchheimer G-09 and with the local police department.
- Alert the General Counsel's office if your stolen laptop, pc or media contains university or affiliate confidential information pertaining to students or patients.
- Change passwords to websites.