

Spring 2019 Financial Security Tips Newsletter

"On-Line Surveys"

Everybody is looking for ways to make more money. Even if they have a good job, people want to generate more income to buy a new phone, a new car, or take a trip. It seems everyone has a "side-hustle," a second job or something they do to increase their income. They may drive for Uber or Lyft, have a part-time job in a store, run garage sales or yard sales, or do other part-time or temporary jobs.

We often see websites saying you can get paid to take online surveys. How cool would *that* be? You could sit at home at your computer, giving your personal opinion on products or services. With today's technology, you could even do it from your phone or tablet, no matter where you are!

But is it really a good thing?

Some online survey offers are scams, designed to steal your personal and your money. They will ask you to send them money for training or materials you will need to perform their surveys. Once you send the money, you won't hear from them again. Your personal information could be sold to other scammers who will send out "phishing" emails or "smishing" texts to lure you into clicking on a link or sending them money. Some survey scammers will send you an "advance fee," check, which they tell you to cash. Then, you are instructed to send back some money. Of course, the check is counterfeit and you are out the total amount of the check.

There are some legitimate online survey companies. They offer you rewards points which you can exchange for gifts once you accumulate enough points. All for telling them what you think. What a great deal!

When you sign up to give your opinions and thoughts to online survey companies, you also have to give them your personal information. Of course, they will want your email address, so they can communicate with you. They will want your phone number to communicate with you, too. And, they will want your name, to make their communications personal and human. They will need your address so they know where to ship the "rewards" you earn. Having your address tells them what part of the world you are in, to help them understand regional differences in opinions. They will all ask for your date of birth, too. They will say that helps them understand in the opinions of different age people.

Think about all the personal information you are giving that company: Your name, address, birthday, phone number. You are also telling them all the things you like and don't like. That company, and everyone who works for it, will know everything about you. They may know you better than you know yourself.

When you give away so much personal information, you lose your personal identity. You are losing your freedom because they can pretend to be you.

We like the idea of doing online surveys for money, because it shows our opinions count. We like them even more because online surveys are easy to do. Everybody likes easy money. But remember what grandpa used to tell you: nothing of value comes easy. And dad always said, "If it seems too good to be true, it probably is."

