NAPLES COMPUTERS HOW-TO · BUSINESS I.T.

Signs Your Computer Has Been Hacked, and When to Call a Pro

Not every slowdown or strange pop-up means your computer's been hacked. This guide covers the real signs worth taking seriously, like accounts you don't recognize or settings changing on their own, the first safe steps to take, and when it's time to get it checked.

Real signs vs false alarms

Not every slowdown or weird pop-up means you've been hacked.

Real signs: accounts you don't recognize
Password reset emails you didn't request, or logins from places you've never been.

Real signs: things changing on their own
New browser toolbars, a different homepage, or programs you never installed.

Usually not hacking: just slow
A slow computer is far more often age, a full drive, or too many startup programs.

Step by step

HACKED OR NOT?

? Think your computer's been hacked?

Some signs are real red flags; others are just a slow afternoon. Here's how to tell the difference.

WHAT TO DO
We're Naples Computers, since 1993.



STEP 1 OF 3

! Disconnect from the network

Turn off Wi-Fi, or unplug the cable, so nothing more can be sent out while you figure out what's going on.

WHAT TO DO

This alone stops most active problems from getting worse.



Cut the connection first

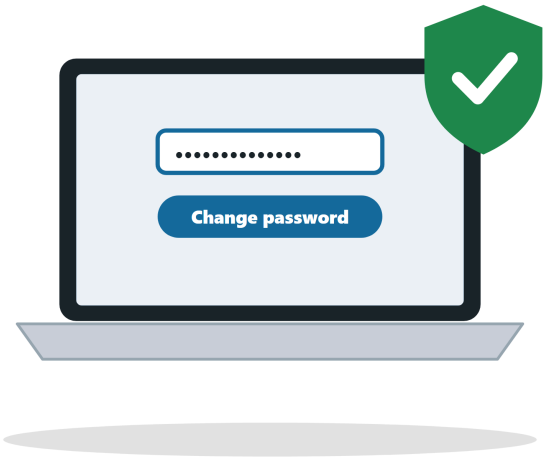
STEP 2 OF 3

! Change passwords, from another device

Your phone or another computer, not the one you suspect; start with email, since it can reset everything else.

WHAT TO DO

If the affected computer still has a keylogger or similar running, typing a new password on it defeats the purpose.



From a device you trust

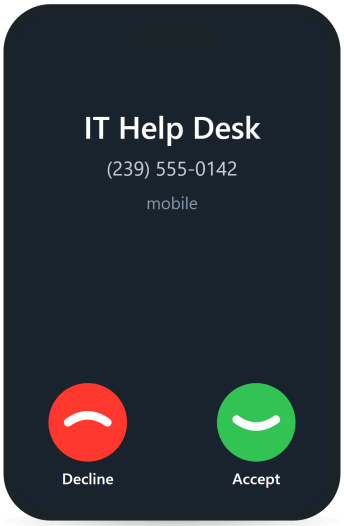
STEP 3 OF 3

! Get it checked before using it again

A real look confirms what's actually going on, and whether it needs a full cleanup.

WHAT TO DO

Using it normally again before it's checked just gives any problem more time to spread.



Checked before you use it again

A few more tips

- [ ] Turn on two-factor authentication
  Even a known password becomes far less useful to someone else with this turned on
- [ ] Watch for follow-up messages
  Friends or contacts reporting strange messages from your accounts is a real sign too
- [ ] Serious business incidents can be reported to CISA
  The federal government's cybersecurity agency accepts reports of cyber incidents

Recap: signs your computer was hacked

- [ ] Real signs: accounts you don't recognize, or settings changing on their own
- [ ] Disconnect from the network first
- [ ] Change passwords from a different device
- [ ] Get it checked before using it again

Change passwords from a different device, not the one you suspect; if something's still running on the affected computer, typing a new password on it would defeat the purpose.



Think your computer's been hacked?

Call 239-513-1960

naplescomputers.com · **We Make I.T. Happen!**