

Toolkit to empower seniors with scam-proofing savvy and online safety smarts

Get Set Up for Safety programme includes SCAMS acronym to recognise red flags

Media release – 12th February 2024

Arming older New Zealanders with the skills and know-how to keep themselves safe online, is the focus of a new initiative launched nationwide by Netsafe today.

A joint project with Chorus, the Get Set Up for Safety programme includes a toolkit of free guides, videos, and other resources with practical advice on everything from fundamental online safety and security habits through to protection from financial scams and safer online shopping and socialising.

According to research conducted by Netsafe in 2023 as part of the Annual Population Survey almost half (47%) of over 70s expressed interest in learning more about online safety and how to protect themselves against scams. A similar number (49%) said they require assistance at least occasionally when using digital devices.

Senior sector organisations including Digital Seniors, Age Concern and the 20/20 Trust, who were consulted during the development of the toolkit, echoed this feedback, highlighting the need for better resources on these issues.

“The ability to identify scams and protection from financial fraud are key issues for seniors, however we also know older adults want more support and information so they can fully enjoy the benefits of the digital world,” says Netsafe Chief Online Safety Officer Sean Lyons.

“Get Set Up for Safety is designed to help seniors feel more comfortable and knowledgeable when they are online and to demystify the digital world for those who aren’t yet confident in the digital space, which is often due to concerns about safety and security.

“Scams are understandably a top concern among older adults, so as part of the Get Set Up for Safety programme we’re introducing a new easy-to-remember acronym to help people recognise the red flags, **SCAMS = Surprise, Control, Access, Money, Stop**”.

The Get Set Up for Safety programme includes free printable guides, pamphlets and a series of videos covering topics such as:

- Safe online shopping and banking
- How to spot a scam
- Social media settings and safety
- Setting up devices securely
- User-friendly device settings
- Glossary of terminology

Hannah Taylor, Chorus Head of Sustainability says Chorus is very proud to support Netsafe's important mahi on behalf of older adults in Aotearoa,

"This partnership has been driven out of a desire to empower people and keep them safe online," she says.

"In an age where online safety issues such as scams are becoming hugely problematic and digital skills are a basic life necessity, it's clear these resources are much needed.

"This mahi has been truly collaborative, with input from many different organisations who share a common goal of enabling older adults to embrace the benefits of the digital world".

With over one million New Zealanders expected to age into the 65+ bracket by 2028 and essential services increasingly moving online, the programme fills an important resource gap for many public-facing organisations such as public libraries, community groups and charity organisations, that older adults often turn to for assistance with digital matters.

The Get Set Up for Safety resources will be freely available to access, download, or print out from the Netsafe website at www.netsafe.org.nz/olderpeople.

Printed pamphlets and other collateral will also be available nationally over the coming months, at public libraries, Chorus community events, Digital Seniors hubs and Age Concern regional offices, among other locations.

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