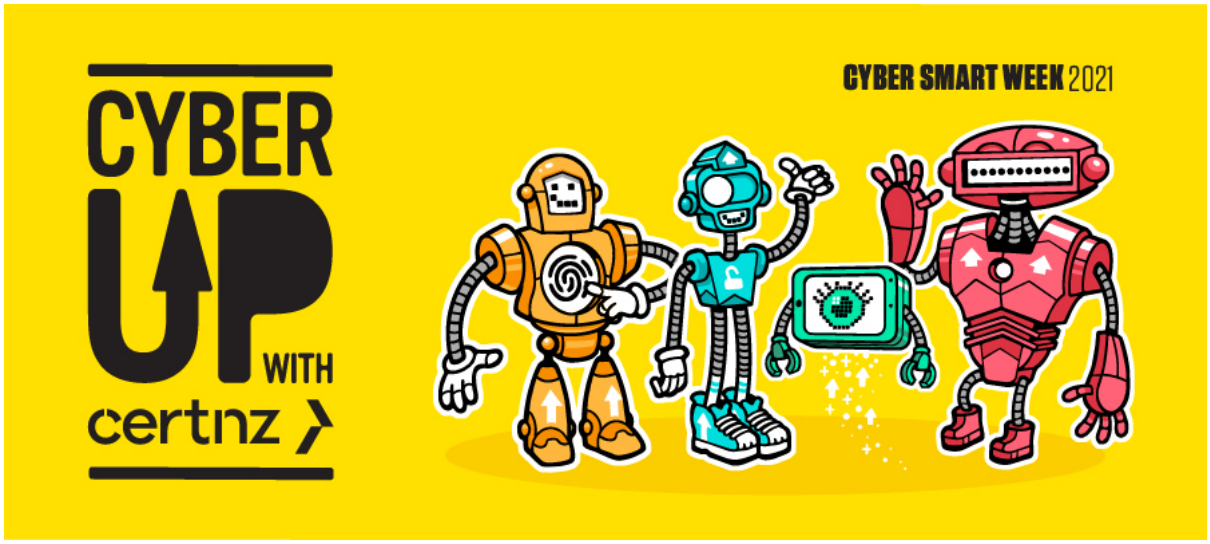
Cyber Smart Week 2021 editorial



Cyber Smart Week – Cyber Up with CERT NZ

Robots roaming your screens? It must be Cyber Smart Week! This is when CERT NZ's bubbly band of bots come out of hibernation and share important messages to help us all keep secure online. And they're urging all New Zealanders– including, you – to Cyber Up.

Cyber security threats are on the rise and anyone can be a target. It may come as a surprise, but your personal and financial information is highly valuable to attackers. So it's worth putting some simple steps in place to defend against them. The good news is, it's easy to do!

So UP your online defences and keep attackers out by taking these four simple steps:

Step 1. Upsize your passwords

Upsizing your passwords is one of the best ways to protect yourself online.

Long and strong passwords are much harder for attackers to crack. We recommend creating a passphrase, that's a string of four or more words as it's easier to remember and is stronger than a random mix of letters, numbers and symbols.

It's also important to use different passwords on each account. If an attacker gets hold of one of your passwords, they can't get access to all of your other accounts. It also means you only have to change the password for that one account.

Check out CERT NZ's Guide to Good Passwords and how to keep them safe with a Password Manager

Step 2. Upgrade to two-factor authentication

Upgrading to two-factor authentication (2FA) adds another layer of security to your accounts.

It's a simple extra step after you log in, like using your thumb print or entering a code from an app.

You can enable 2FA on most of your online accounts, and your devices. You'll usually find the option to

turn it on in the privacy settings

Check out CERT NZ's guide for turning on 2FA

Step 3. Uphold your privacy

Uphold your privacy and keep a check on what information you're sharing online, and who you're sharing it with. We're so used to sharing things online that we don't always think about how it affects our privacy.

Check that the privacy settings on your social media accounts are set to 'Friends Only' so only those you know can see what you're up to.

And when signing up for a new online account, just provide the information that the account requires to be functional for you. Do they really need to know your middle name and phone number?

The information you share could enable attackers to impersonate you online or even try to steal your identity.

Check out CERT NZ's guide to protecting your privacy

Step 4. Update your apps and devices

When you're alerted to an update for your device, don't ignore it — install it as soon as possible. As well as adding new features, updates keep bugs and viruses out and fix security risks that attackers can use to gain access to your information.

Try setting updates to take place automatically whenever a new version is available. That way, you don't have to think about it!

Check out CERT NZ's guide for keeping apps and devices up-to-date

Report it

If you, or someone you know, experiences a cyber security incident, report it to CERT NZ. They're here to help New Zealanders protect and recover from cyber security threats and incidents.

Report an issue www.cert.govt.nz/report