

Physically Secure Your Computer

Unfortunately, computer thefts do occasionally happen at Whitman. Almost always it is a crime of opportunity — a laptop left alone and unsecured in the library, for example. It is your responsibility to ensure that your computer is secured against physical theft. The following advice can help you to that end.

Protect the Computer Itself

The best way to protect yourself from computer theft is to make it as difficult as possible for someone to pick up your machine and run off with it.

- If you have a desktop computer, you may wish to investigate **padlocking the case shut** to prevent theft of internal components.
- If you have a laptop computer, you may wish to acquire a **laptop locking cable**: the computer equivalent of a bicycle lock.
- At the very least, **do not leave your laptop unprotected or unattended**, in any open area, even for a few minutes, and always make sure you close and lock your room door when you leave.

Protect Access to Your Computer's Data

If the worst should happen, and your computer does get stolen, the thief could gain access to all of your computer's secrets. It may not seem a big deal for a Bad Guy to see your homework assignments or music collection, but your computer could also contain some very valuable and important information about you. Passwords, financial data... even something as mundane as your Facebook credentials can have value to an attacker, and can easily be recovered from a stolen computer unless you take steps to protect your data.

- Set a **hard drive password**.
- If your laptop has a **fingerprint scanner**, consider using it to lock access to your computer's operating system.
- **Encrypt your home folder**. OS X and (some versions of) Windows have built-in tools for doing this. More information may be found on our [Encryption](#) page.
- Even better, **encrypt your entire hard drive**. For information on how to do this, see our [Encryption](#) page.

Related articles

- [Multi-Factor Authentication - MFA](#)
- [Bringing a Computer and related technology to Whitman](#)
- [OUCH! - Information Security Newsletters](#)
- [Whitman College Work from Home](#)
- [Multi-Factor FAQ](#)