

# A Traveler's Guide To Laptop Security

By [John Gontowicz](#)

## The facts:

- More than 1,700 laptops are lost or stolen every day. That is more than 620,050 a year.
- 97% of them are never recovered, according to the FBI.
- Data stored on the devices - customer lists, financial data, and correspondence - is critical.
- The equipment itself -- laptops, Blackberry's, PDAs, LCD monitors, cell phones - are prime items for theft and they are expensive to replace.
- Professional thieves are not interested in the laptop, only its resale value.

Below are the top fifteen tips for protecting your laptop:

1. When you are traveling with a laptop please carry the laptop with you. Many incidences have happened where laptops were stolen from baggage checked in at airports because the traveler did not want to carry the extra weight.
2. Do not leave your laptop or carrying case in plain view when traveling by car.
3. Protect your laptop from the environment. A sudden change in temperature can crack the display.
4. When using a carrying case pick a bag that does not look like a computer bag. I always see fashionable business people carrying laptops in expensive cases. Those cases say - "Laptop! Laptop! Steal me!" Please watch your computer bag at all times.
5. An unsecured laptop computer is very susceptible to data theft, especially if you use it in wireless locations.
6. Passwords are needed for laptop computers.
7. Laptops are pretty attractive for thieves. A number of companies sell software that silently phones home when it's eventually reconnected to a network after the unit is stolen.
8. Turn off the boot (start-up) sequence on the laptop and have it start using the hard drive.
9. Lock up the laptop. This is pretty obvious, but it is so often overlooked. One of the easiest and most cost-effective ways to secure your mobile PC is to use a security cable or lock to attach your laptop to a stationary object. If you must leave your unlocked laptop behind while you are at a hotel, put the Do Not Disturb sign on the door.

10. Make sure that you use Internet Security, spyware prevention, and anti-virus software.
11. Make sure you backup all of your data onto a CD, external drive, another PC, or an Internet service.
12. Security experts claim that you should engrave your name on a laptop because it would be harder for a thief to fence it.
13. You might want to consider buying insurance for your laptop. Many homeowners' insurance policies don't cover computers.
14. Never leave access numbers or passwords in your carrying case. Keeping your password with your laptop is like keeping the keys in your car.
15. Use a screen guard. These guards help prevent people from peaking over your shoulder as you work on sensitive information in a public place.

If you follow these basic guidelines and some common sense, you don't have to give up yours.

Resource: John Gontowicz, author of Computer 101: The Questions You Were Afraid to Ask and How to Keep Your Computer Running Stronger, Faster and Longer - <http://www.yourpcguide.com> Computer Tips Newsletter – [computers@sendfree.com](mailto:computers@sendfree.com) John has been in the computer field since 1978. He does computer training on all Microsoft products, repairs, upgrades, support, and form / template design. He also teaches classes on Identity Theft and Internet Safety. This is an abridged version of this article. For the full version go to <http://www.yourpcguide.com/laptop.htm>