How do you know your information is safe online or that a company or job posting is legitimate? Consider these red flags when internship/job searching to make sure you are not giving your information over to the wrong people. Scams and identity theft are real problems online! Click here to watch an information video about FTC Job Scams.

A COMPANY SHOULD NEVER ASK YOU TO...

- Give a credit card, bank or PayPal account number
- Send a payment by wire service or courier
- Offer you a large payment or reward in exchange for allowing the use of your bank account—often for depositing checks or transferring money
- Transfer money, including via e-Bay, PayPal or Western Union money orders
- Provide personal information such as your Social Security Number before a job offer
- Send a photo copy of your ID, i.e., driver’s license to “verify identity”

TIPS TO ENSURE THAT A COMPANY IS CREDIBLE

- The posting appears to come from a legitimate company or organization, but the contact’s email address does not match the company’s website domain. (i.e., jdoe@gmail.com rather than jdoe@companyname.com)
- The job posting focuses on the amount of money you will make and not job responsibilities
- Postings for Mystery Shoppers, work at home, or virtual Administrative Assistants or Bookkeepers are marketed
- Large salaries emphasized for entry-level jobs
- Multiple misspellings in the job post
- Upfront program fees are required for international travel
- The URL listed in the ad goes to the internet domain of another company or site
- The position initially seems to be a traditional job, but upon further research or contact, is actually an independent contractor or franchise opportunity

HOW CAN YOU CHECK LEGITIMACY?

- Visit the Better Business Bureau. See if the company exists, how long it’s been around and what kinds of complaints, if any, have been filed against it.
- Use Google to search for information on the company and find their website. If you find blogs or sites complaining about the company, beware!
- While using Google, add words like “scam” or “pyramid scheme” after the company name. If the results are questionable and suspicious, beware!
- Check questionable salary offers against employee-earnings sites such as Salary.com to see if the numbers come within a normal range.

* Schedule an appointment with a Career Coach if you are unsure about a company’s legitimacy.