

Background

Look out for your laptop

8,500 laptops or other mobile devices are lost by UK business travellers every year. That figure, incredible as it may seem, is a worrying statistic. It is not just the cost of the hardware but the loss of data that is worrying for the forgetful or unlucky traveller. In another development more and more US citizens are reporting having their laptops **confiscated** or data copied during security checks at airports.

To help the business traveller we have **compiled** a list of Do's and Don'ts for those who travel with their laptops.

- 1 Keep your laptop with you at all times, from the time you are **dropped off** at the airport until the time the taxi picks you up at the other end. Do not let it out of your sight even if you are just going to **freshen up**.
- 2 There is no need to worry about your laptop being X-rayed – the radiation is not strong enough to harm your hard drive. If you look worried about the X-ray process the security officers might decide to do a hand check as well. However laptops are not supposed to **pass through** metal detectors. If a security guard asks you to pass through with your laptop, ask politely if it can be hand checked instead.
- 3 Sometimes you have to take your laptop out of its case to pass it through the X-ray machine. Make sure all other equipment is secure so you don't lose your mouse or webcam, etc.
- 4 Sometimes you will be asked to turn the laptop on **to prove** that it is a laptop (a 'hand check'). Don't argue, turn it on and do what is asked of you. It is a good idea to leave your computer on standby mode so it opens up quickly.
- 5 Avoid attracting attention to yourself by keeping a **low profile**. Security officials are more likely to search you more thoroughly if they have noticed you before you go through security.
- 6 Don't use your laptop unless you really need to. If you need to use it at the airport, look around for somewhere quiet to use it. Don't use it in busy areas where it would be easy for someone to see what you are doing without you noticing.
- 7 If someone is taking an interest in your laptop stop using it and move away from the scene. They may be looking for something to steal.
- 8 You are supposed to carry the original receipts with your passport. If you cannot prove that the computer was bought in your home country rather than overseas, you may have to pay **customs duty** or might have your laptop confiscated.
- 9 Keep your back-up discs or flash drives in a different bag. If you lose your laptop then you still have the back up and can still do your business.
- 10 A final piece of advice is to think about buying a second laptop that you use specifically for travelling. You don't have to spend lots of money on it, perhaps think about buying a second-hand one. Then only put what you need on your travel laptop.

Hopefully with these tips we can help you keep your laptop safe and have an enjoyable and profitable journey.

Exercises

1 Discuss these questions with a partner.

- 1 How often do you travel abroad for business?
- 2 What things do you take with you?
- 3 Have you ever lost anything? If so, what? If not, what would be the worst thing you could lose?

2 Read the first paragraph of the text and decide what the purpose of the text is.

3 Work with a partner. Try to think of two or three pieces of advice about travelling with a laptop.

4 Read the text quickly and see if your ideas from 3 are included.

5 Read the text again and decide if these statements are true (T) or false (F).

- 1 If you travel to the USA, your computer's data will be copied.
- 2 X-raying is not harmful to a laptop.
- 3 Metal detectors are not harmful to a laptop.
- 4 Security officials need to see that a laptop is really a laptop.
- 5 Security officials search everyone thoroughly.
- 6 You should have a receipt for your computer.

6 Answer these questions in your own words.

- 1 Why shouldn't you use your laptop at an airport?
- 2 Why should you try not to draw attention to yourself?
- 3 Why should you keep your back-up flash drive in a different bag?
- 4 What is the advantage of having a second laptop?

7 Work with a partner. Turn over the text and try and remember the tips. Begin each tip with either *Do* or *Don't*.

Example: *Don't leave your laptop anywhere. / Do keep it with you all the time.*

8 Match the words in bold in the text to the correct definition 1–8.

- 1 to produce a book, list, report, etc. by bringing together different items, articles, songs, etc.: _____
- 2 not getting a lot of attention: _____
- 3 to go through something: _____
- 4 to officially take something away from somebody, especially as a punishment: _____
- 5 to use facts, evidence, etc. to show that something is true: _____
- 6 the taxes that must be paid to the government when goods are brought in from other countries: _____
- 7 to make oneself cleaner, cooler / to feel more pleasant: _____
- 8 to stop so that somebody can get out of a car, etc.; to deliver something on the way to somewhere else: _____

9 Look back at the text and choose three words you could use in your day-to-day work.

10 Work with a partner and discuss these questions.

- 1 Do you think the advice in the text is good advice?
- 2 Which is the best tip?
- 3 Which piece(s) of advice do you follow?