

Cybersecurity Presentation

Professor Robert Osgood, Director of Computer Forensics and Data Analytics at George Mason University, spoke on cybersecurity at a Village meeting hosted by Dawn Donald at her home on Lakeview Drive Saturday, May 14. Mr. Osgood, a recently retired FBI agent, specializes in computer forensics and cyber-crime.

Professor Osgood explained that computer forensics is analysis of vicious code; the field combines computer science, engineering, law and ethics. The information extracted from computers is intended to be admissible evidence in prosecuting criminals.

If Professor Osgood can get hold of a computer or a cell phone, he can access everything about us. A cell phone is “awash with information,” Professor Osgood noted. He does not bank online. He believes that the Chromebook is “probably the most secure operating system today” since everything on it is encrypted.

He recommends that executives traveling abroad take a “burner phone” and a Chromebook with them and leave their regular cell phone and laptop at home. He suggests that if your cell phone is locked with a four-digit code you change that to a pass-phrase, which is much harder to break. A pass-phrase might be a sentence you would remember, like “My dog has fleas.”

“There is no such thing as zero risk,” he notes. To keep your computer as safe from incursion as possible, he recommends three steps: 1) make sure that all the security and operating system software is up-to-date; 2) don’t click on any unknown links sent via email; 3) back up your data regularly.