

Careful how you tweet!

Edinburgh residents are effectively leaving their homes open to burglary because of a naïve attitude to social media, a study finds.

Personal information, crucial for burglars in targeting properties, is being posted on social media accounts through status updates, photographs, and location tags.

An overwhelming 83% of Edinburgh's social media users admit to tagging themselves at the airport to let their social media followers of their activity. In doing so, they are informing potential criminals of their empty homes.

Once at their sunny destination, Edinburgh residents continue to pass information on, with over half tagging themselves as being abroad, putting their home at further risk.

Over half of residents only privatise certain posts, or leave their profiles entirely public. This means potential criminals can view what individuals own, and be notified when their home is vacant.

Following a spate of high profile burglaries related to social media – notably former boxing champion Ricky Hatton – it seems that though we wouldn't leave our windows open or keys in the door, we are taking risks like this every day online.

Not only can burglars openly see these social media profiles, but the profiles themselves are rife with further information that help burglars to get their foot in your front door.

The study, by home security company Safe Shop, also found:

- Men are more likely to post photos or tag into locations when out of the house
- Nightclubs and cinemas are also popular for people tagging in on social media

To see how you can avoid advertising your home and possessions to would-be burglars on social media, see the Safe Shop's comprehensive guide on [how to safe-guard sensitive information online](#).

Security expert, Anthony Neary of Safe, offers advice:

"It's worrying to see such a high number of Edinburgh social media users putting their homes and possessions at risk for the sake of updating mates about their holiday. You must be aware of what information you are putting out there. If given the chance burglars now have the opportunity to take advantage of personal information available on social media."

"Ensure that crime can be prevented by securing your accounts to limit what can be seen of posts, location tags, and photographs."

"Our advice is simple: Don't tweet the burglar!"

Mike Hine, Deputy Editor at Infosecurity magazine, commented on the findings:

"There is no doubt that publicising one's whereabouts frequently, or at all times, is risky if this information is viewable by anyone."

"Criminals can use personal information like this to build a profile of that person's behaviour which can make them more susceptible to a range of crimes."