

Radio Days – 2008-11-01

Tip of the Week — Staying Safe

The internet reared its uglier side again this week. A listener rang to say that their computer was behaving badly again. It turned out that their computer had been infected with a virus and too many things would not work. They had broken all my rules and the result was that an unknown program had changed some of the vital parts of Windows with its own versions. This meant that there was no way an anti-virus program could work, and they had also lost the ability both to access the internet and to burn CDs.

All was not lost, however: using some programs on my USB memory stick I was able to remove the problem program. This left the changed sections of Windows still unable to do all sorts of things so it was time to use a little-known Windows utility: SFC. This stands for System File Checker and allows you to restore the correct version of Windows programs. It does need your Windows install disc, so please ensure that you have it available.

One problem was that the computer had a recovery disc, not an install disc. This meant that the Windows files could not be restored. Fortunately I had an install disc too, so used that to complete the recovery. My client now has good anti-virus and anti-malware programs. Please ensure that you have them as well!

Word Processing on the Internet

There are many web sites which allow you to do word processing at no cost apart from your internet access charges. One such site, as with everything on the net, is Google. They are not the only site to offer online word processing and other products, but they have some strong competition. One of the best-known is Zoho, a bad pun on SOHO (Small Office Home Office). All of them offer a free version for home users.

How do they do this? Why do they do this? I am not sure, but the clue might lie in the fact that there are both personal and business sides to the program: the business sides costing money but being cheaper than buying the equivalent program for each computer.

If you are a person who only needs a word processor or a spreadsheet very occasionally, and the cost and time to download a free office suite like OpenOffice or KOffice then websites like Zoho are the ideal way to do your word processing or similar tasks.

You will need to create an account. This is free, but you will need a unique user name so that you are not confused with another person. Creating an account is easy: Zoho just asks for a user name and password and a live email address. Nothing too difficult!

The only downside is that your data is stored on somebody else's computer, so if it contains compromising material you may be in for a big shock when the boys or girls in blue descend on you!

Websites

Zoho	www.zoho.com
OpenOffice	www.openoffice.org
KOffice	(Not available for Windows)