

Radio Days – 2009-01-31

Online Security: Keep your Computer Hardened

Computers can easily become prey to unscrupulous people. The consequences of this are all around us: spam, viruses, keyloggers and other types of programs too numerous to mention. This weekly segment will look at the simple, and mostly free, ways that you can keep your computer as hardened as possible.

Just as gardens and homes need tender loving care to be at their best, so a computer which accesses the internet needs similar attention to ensure that it works at its peak: keeping the internet and emails flowing smoothly. There are some simple tasks which you will need to do to ensure that your computer starts its internet life the correct way. After you have taken these steps you can almost let your computer take care of itself.

Many people are not aware that they are contributing to the distribution of internet nasties. This is because they have allowed their computer to become part of a zombie network which can be controlled remotely to do all sorts of things. Just because you do not know about a problem does not mean that the problem does not exist!

Computer programs are more like jigsaw puzzles than pictures. If a part of a jigsaw puzzle becomes defective you can replace just that part. This is what happens when updates are downloaded to your computer. Windows downloads updates automatically, but all other programs need help to be updated. This is where a program like *Secunia Personal Software Inspector (PSI)* is such a great help. Download this program and run a scan. You will probably find that there are a number of programs which need to be updated to make them as hardened as possible. Just clicking on each link in turn will make your computer as resistant to compromise as possible.

This program is the first step in the next few weeks which will help you become a more aware netizen and do your part in reducing the world-wide spam problem. If you have ever received a spam email then you can thank the people who have allowed their computer to become a zombie for someone else.

Sending an Email to More Than One Person

There are three ways to send emails to more than one person. They are *To:*, *CC:* and *BCC:*.

All addresses in the *To:* and *CC:* (Carbon Copy) areas are visible to everybody who gets the email, but those address in *BCC:* (Blind Carbon Copy) are hidden from everybody. When you send an email to many people you may want to consider the privacy issue: not everybody want everybody else to know their email address. For this reason the best way to send an email to many people is to send it to yourself (yes, you can do that easily) and put everybody else's address in the *BCC* section.

If you cannot see the *BCC* section just click on *To* then select each address in turn then click on *BCC*.

- *To:* Everybody sees all these email addresses
- *CC:* Everybody sees all these email addresses
- *BCC:* Nobody sees these email addresses

Websites

Personal Software Inspector www.secunia.com