

Radio Days – 2009-02-28

Tip of the Week – Feral Finger Follies

This week, as usual, was an interesting one. I had a call from a client who lost all the details of one of her suppliers. She did not know the amount owed, or the address and phone number. She was using MYOB and the supplier had just disappeared off her screen. In a panic she rang me to get her information back.

I knew that the supplier was still in the system because MYOB does not allow you to delete a supplier which has transactions. The trick would be to find it and work out what had happened. After some searching I discovered that the supplier's name had changed to "?": a question mark and nothing else! This is because MYOB does not allow you to cancel out of a change to a record, so any typing mistakes that you make are instantly recorded. Now that we knew what had happened it was easy to fix, and my client was grateful to get her supplier back.

The moral of this story is not to type anything unless you do mean to type it.

Online Security: Anti-Virus Programs

After all your hard work over the last week, using common sense and MailWasher to screen your emails, you still let through a number of programs which deleted all your emails, photos and music. You need another line of defence. This new line of defence is called *Anti-Virus*.

Up till now I have promoted proactive safety: doing your best to prevent the black-hats from getting into your computer. This time I am promoting reactive safety in case your proactive safety slips up. Your anti-virus program is a case in point: it should sit there, unobtrusively, until an unwanted program tries to install itself onto your computer.

I have spoken about good free-for-personal-use anti-virus programs before, and my choice changes almost every time I speak. This is because new programs come onto the market and old ones disappear. My current favourite anti-virus program is *AVG Free*, but I have just started to use the Comodo security suite which has both an anti-virus and a firewall. All Comodo programs that I have used have been excellent and I am beginning to realise that the combination of the Comodo anti-virus and firewall may be the best that I have tried for a long time. This is not a blanket endorsement of this program as I have only been using it on my main computer for a day or two after my previous firewall drove me mad with its incessant demands for me to pay for the free version!

One problem that I have had over the last couple of weeks is people who ring to state that their Avast anti-virus needs to be re-registered before it will update again. This step is too much for many people so Avast is coming off the preferred list. It also has problems when doing a scan of a computer. I, and many others, find that the process of getting a scan going is fraught with terror of doing the wrong thing. At one stage I was left with an Avast program which would not do anything because the settings were wrong for a scan of my hard disc. These two, together with other problems with Avast, mean that I now no longer recommend it for use. This is a pity because it seems to do an excellent job.

Comodo states, for many of its programs, that they will be free forever. It does make full-version programs, and these obviously bring in enough money to cover writing its free ones. Give Comodo a go: you may well be surprised at how good it is. I hope so!

Websites

AVG Free	free.avg.com
Comodo	www.comodo.com