

Radio Days – 2009-03-07

Tip of the Week – Viruses “R” Us

As usual, a number of problems have reared their heads, and on this occasion caused me to get outside help. My client’s computer would not start properly: when you turned it on, it started up then shut down automatically. Starting in *Safe Mode* (by holding F8 down while turning it on) did not help. I got it to start with a standard program, *Bart-PE*, but this could not see my external hard disc so I could not save the data in case anything was lost. The only option was to take it someone who knows more about the internals of Windows than I do.

He was able to reset Windows so that it would start, and this allowed him to remove all the viruses on the computer. Once that was done it was an easy matter to correct the setup. His preferred anti-virus programs are AVG and BitDefender.

There were two anti-virus programs on my client’s computer, and both were out-of-date. I deleted both programs, and the out-of-date firewall, then installed Comodo Internet Security. This put the computer into a much safer state and the client was happy: he had lessons to write and hand-in, and the lack of a computer was a great stress,

Online Security: Anti-Malware Programs

Too many people believe that viruses are the only problems which infect the internet. If only life were so simple! There is a computer term, *Malware*, which many people do not know or understand. *Malware* is a catch-all term which encompasses the different types of problem programs. *Malware* is a compound word: it joins *malicious* and *software* to create a word which describes a group of programs which do more than a virus does.

Anti-virus programs only try to remove one type of unwanted program, and they are losing the war against the criminals who write viruses. This is because the number of viruses can increase more quickly than the anti-virus writers can find each new virus, and then create an inoculation for that new virus. This situation will only get worse so, in the longer term, we will have to use other strategies. I will cover some of these strategies later in this series.

All the programs given here are known to work well. They are free to download and use, and they are updated frequently so that they do not get too far out-of-date. However, like all solutions to a complex problem, they are not infallible. You will still need to use discretion when opening emails and when surfing the web, and use your common sense when surfing. There are many other suggestions that I will make for safer emailing and surfing in the coming weeks, and I hope that you will take note. I still get calls from people who have been caught by unwanted intrusions to their computer, and mostly I can fix the problem but even I still need backup on occasion! You have been warned!

My recommendation is that you download at least one of these programs. My favourites are BOClean and A-Squared. BOClean works in the background to keep you safe while A-Squared needs to be run at least once a week. The most recent version of A-Squared has just been released so, if you have an earlier version, please download and install the latest version which was released on 18 March 2009. Both of these programs get my seal of approval and will do their best to keep you safe. Unfortunately there is no guarantee in the online world, just as there is no guarantee of safety while driving on the road.

Websites

A-Squared	www.emsisoft.com
Ad-Aware	www.lavasoft.com
BOClean	www.comodo.com
Spybot	www.safer-networking.org