

Radio Days – 2009-08-01

Tip of the Week – Check Your Virus Checker

This has been an extraordinary week for me. This week I had many problems that I had not seen before. The main one was a computer which worked some of the time and turned out to have one of the more disastrous viruses that I have ever seen. One of the interesting effects of this virus was that it could infect programs at the most unexpected times.

One major component of this problem was that the anti-virus software on their computer had not been updated for over a year. This program was not one of the ones which I recommend because I feel that it is not good enough for prime time. This combination, with the probable inclusion of LimeWire, is likely to be the cause of the infection.

Please remember that, even if you keep your anti-virus program completely up to date, there is the chance of a *zero-day attack*. A *zero-day attack* is caused by the length of time taken between when the virus is released and when you receive the update to your anti-virus program. This time can be as short as a few hours and as long as a few days, depending on the ability of the writer to obfuscate their program's workings.

Recovering From a Corrupted File

I have, to the point of boredom, advised people to backup of their important files. I advise them to have at least two copies, on different media, in case one is faulty.

The latest data recovery problem occurred with a client who used Outlook for his emails. The data file would not open, and we were told to correct the problem with the recovery program in the Outlook folder. All recovery attempts should be done on copies of the data file, not using the original file, so I copied the file in case anything went further wrong.

The recovery program was worse than useless as there were many emails still missing after the recovery. Next step: find a backup file. There was a backup file but it was in the recycle bin (nobody knows how it got there): there was not a another backup copy in all the regular places. I made sure that he knew how to backup his files, then asked his wife if she was doing backups for the business' accounting data: she asked if we would like a cup of tea!

This reinforces my contention that it is not easy to recover data from corrupt files, and that backup is the only real solution to the data problems which so often occur.

I remember one client who had four backups on floppy discs. After her computer crashed I had to install Windows, her programs then her data. It was when I came to restoring her accounting data that the problem with her floppy discs appeared.

The most recent floppy disc was unreadable, as were both the second and the third most recent. As I tried the fourth, and last, floppy disc we looked at each other and crossed our fingers. This must have worked because the data magically appeared on her hard disc. I had previously advised her to replace her floppy discs every year for safety: after this near miss she replaced all four, much to my relief.

The moral of these stories:

- make sure that your backups are done
- make sure that your backups are readable
- make sure that your backups are available when needed

Websites

Comodo backup	backup.comodo.com
CDCheck	www.kvipu.com/cdcheck