Radio Days – 2011-02-26

Tip of the Week – Checking Emails for Spam

I have mentioned MailWasher before. This program checks your emails before they have a chance to download spam or a virus to your computer. The free version handles one email address, but you can sometimes circumvent this restriction if you forward your emails to a single address which can be checked by MailWasher.

This excellent program came in handy with a new client who had just got her first internet connection. She was able to check her emails for spam and viruses using MailWasher. This gave her a great sense of security because she was worried: a friend was receiving lots of spam and she did not want to repeat her friend's problem. She saw just how easy it is to use MailWasher to check each email for spam before downloading it to her email program. I also showed her how to bounce unwanted emails using MailWasher and she was delighted with this feature as well.

Use Only One Anti-Virus

I have frequently spoken about anti-virus programs. These programs are the bedrock upon which you build the protection of your computer. They are an essential program for everybody who uses the internet. Unfortunately there are too many people who feel that they are immune from viruses, and they are the people who make viruses worse for the rest of us.

There are also too many people out there who feel that, if one anti-virus program is good, then two must be even better. I have even met people who feel that if two anti-virus programs are good then three, or even four or more, would be even better.

This is not true.

Anti-virus programs work by checking all your programs as they start to run and all your data files as they are opened or saved. Data files are the photos that you save from your camera onto your computer and the emails that you get from friends. If you are writing the Great Australian Novel then your latest book is a data file, and all the other documents that you open or save are also data files.

When you have one anti-virus program installed it has no competition for this task. When you have two anti-virus programs installed they compete to see who can do the job first. This means that they spend too much time and too many resources fighting each other and not enough of either fighting viruses. The result is that your computer takes too long to start up when you switch it on and it takes too long to start each program running. The more anti-virus programs you have installed the more your computer will slow down.

Another disadvantage of using more than one anti-virus is the time spent updating each set of signature files. Your anti-virus program will perform an automatic update each time you log onto the internet. If you have broadband (ADSL, wireless or satellite) this is every time that you start your computer. With large anti-virus programs like AVG this update can take up to an hour with a dial-up connection.

My current favourite anti-virus program is Microsoft Security Essentials. This free program has smaller downloads than most anti-virus programs and it takes up far fewer of your computer's resources than my previous favourite anti-virus program.

Further Information

MailWasher Free	www.mailwasher.net
Microsoft Security Essentials	www.microsoft.com/security_essentials