

Radio Days – 2012-05-12

Tip of the Week – Would You Like A Disc With That?

A recent client needed to upgrade her accounting program to the latest version so she asked me to organise it for her. I checked her current program and found her serial number so that I could claim the upgrade price which, as usual, is about half the full price. I then rang the manufacturer's sales department to order an upgrade to the latest version.

It was at this stage that the whole scenario went haywire. I was asked for my client's business name. This was the usual procedure so I gave it. I was then informed that the serial number was licensed to my client's accountant and that it was being used incorrectly. The accountant had informed my client that he was allowed to sell his copy to four people each year.

This meant that he had the same relationship with the manufacturer that I have.

The only problem is that his version of what was allowed does not agree with the version that the manufacturer insists is the correct version. Under the manufacturer's version a reseller is allowed to install his copy on five computers *in his or her business and directly under his or her control*. You are not allowed to sell your copy to other businesses.

The moral of this story is that you should always insist on getting a CD or DVD whenever you pay for computer software. There are exceptions to this rule: two of the most common are when you download and pay for software over the internet and when you buy an installation key in a shop for software already installed on your computer.

Keeping Up To Date

I have written about this before, and I may well write about it again. I saw a client recently who felt that their computer was working too slowly and was unable to access two important web sites: web sites which were important to their business. I found that neither of these web sites was able to be displayed.

I checked their anti-virus program: it was an old version of AVG Free. Rather than update AVG I decided to install Microsoft Security Essentials as it does not need AVG's annual update. I have lost count of the number of clients who have had a long-outdated version of AVG on their computer because they did not know how to update this program. This installation of MSE was not successful because a necessary utility had not been installed. This was the first time that I had encountered this message.

While I was wondering how to approach this problem I noticed that the yellow Windows XP icon near the clock on the task bar was showing that an update was available to be installed. Glad of something to do, I started to install this update when I realised that it was Service Pack 3 for Windows XP. Now please remember that Windows XP SP3 was released about eight or ten years ago.

This means that, by now, **ALL** Windows XP computers should have had SP3 installed many years ago. Microsoft even provided free CDs with this service pack: at one stage I had two or three of them so that I could install them on my clients' computers. I have not seen or used one of these CDs for more years than I can remember.

While I gathered my thoughts my client's computer was busy installing SP3. By the time the service pack was installed and the computer restarted I had realised that this computer was in dire need of a good update.

Again I downloaded and installed Microsoft Security Essentials: this time the installation worked perfectly! It is amazing just what a difference it makes to a computer whose copy of Windows has been kept up to date.

I then made the assumption that, if Windows was so far out of date, it was likely that all the other programs on the computer were also out of date. To fix this I downloaded and installed one of my favourite programs: Secunia PSI. This program keeps the programs on a computer

up to date where possible. While all this was happening I noticed that Windows was silently downloading all the updates which needed Service Pack 3 installed so that they were able to be installed themselves. After installing and running Secunia PSI I decided to restart the computer because of all the changes that I had made.

At this stage I noticed that there were 83 updates to be installed. This took quite some time so we all enjoyed a cuppa: much better than watching grass grow! After the restart the computer was in much better shape. It was also still downloading Windows' updates! I am not sure just how many updates were downloaded and installed because I left after giving instructions that all updates had to be installed every time they downloaded. There was to be no more clicking the big red "X" to stop updates.

I also left instructions that the computer was likely to download more Windows' updates over the next week or so. It was also likely that Secunia PSI would continue to update all the out of date programs over the next week as well so it was worth leaving the computer on for the next week to ensure that it was as up to date as possible.

I am still amazed at just how much difference an up to date computer can make!

Further Information

Microsoft Security Essentials www.microsoft.com/mse

Secunia PSI www.secunia.com