

# Radio Days – 2013-12-14

---

## ***Tip of the Week – Protect Your Computer***

---

During the last week I have helped a number of people whose computer was not protected with any sort of anti-virus program. This is not sensible, especially when you consider that it only takes a few seconds to hack into a computer if you are not concerned about the niceties of doing so.

One excuse that I heard on more than one occasion was that the computer was not online very often so it was not worth getting an anti-virus program. This, I suspect, is a justification because the computer's owner did not know that there are free anti-virus programs out there. Another possibility is that the owner did not know how to download and install an anti-virus program, or perhaps the owner did not know which one was safe.

### ***Free Anti-Virus Programs***

---

I have placed a list of free anti-virus programs another list of free cloud anti-virus programs and another list of free malware removal tools at the end of this document. If you do not have an anti-virus program on your computer then I urge you to download and install one — and only one — of the anti-virus programs in the first group.

The programs in the second group are programs which are designed to find and remove other malware. These all have a free version, and you can have more than one of these programs on your computer.

All of the people who did not have an anti-virus program on their computer had programs which needed to be removed. I installed Malwarebytes on all of these computers and each one had a number of unwanted programs. This was a wake-up call for each of my clients, and each one stated that they would make sure that their new anti-virus program would be kept updated so that they would have the best possible protection.

Even if you do not believe that you could be a possible target you would be surprised to hear what is around the corner for those people who are without protection on their computer.

### ***Free Cloud Anti-Virus Programs***

---

Cloud anti-virus programs are similar to standard anti-virus programs except that they keep their database of viruses in the cloud so that you have the latest virus database available at all times. The corollary to this is that you need a permanent internet connection and, in this age of ADSL, wireless and satellite internet connections there should be no problem with having a permanent internet connection.

This, hopefully, will resolve the problem which far too many of my clients have: they have not updated their anti-virus program or their program's virus database for far too long. Please note that I have not tested any of these programs so cannot vouch for any of them. My personal anti-virus program is Kaspersky. This program is created by a Russian researcher and, as so many of the best (worst) viruses come from Eastern Europe, I expect a Russian anti-virus company to be one of the best at removing viruses. Remember the old saying: *set a thief to catch a thief*.

### ***Free Anti-Malware Programs***

---

Anti-malware programs are increasingly needed by people because the writers of malware are becoming more and more malicious. If you do not know the word, *malware* is a conjunction of *malicious* and *software*. Viruses are malware, but malware is more than just viruses. Not all malware is found by anti-virus programs so a good anti-malware program is important. I use the full version of Malwarebytes because it is both good and cheap.

---

As well as using a current anti-virus program I suggest that you use an anti-malware program to keep your computer as safe as possible.

## ***Locking Viruses***

---

During the week I had a call from a client who reported that his screen was locked. He had restarted his computer but the screen was still locked. The message on the screen stated that his screen was locked and he could have the unlock key for \$1,000.

This sort of virus is increasing. A new variant is the Cryptolocker virus which encrypts all data files on your computer (and on your backup drive if it is attached to your computer!). It is relatively easy to remove the message but your data files are still encrypted and you will not be able to access them unless you can restore from an unencrypted backup. Given the number of my clients who do not have a backup this means that your data will be cactus unless you pay the asking price: \$1,000 in my client's case.

There are a number of these viruses out there in the wild. Some, according to some websites, are easy to remove with a simple download of a malware remover program like Malwarebytes while others are not. If you have anything valuable on your computer – perhaps only some photos of your grandchildren or some email addresses – then I urge you to make sure that you have, at the very least, a free anti-virus program. The list of free anti-virus programs at the end of this document is a good starting point for a download.

If you do not know how to download and install an anti-virus program then please get good help. Just because your ten-year-old grandchild says that he or she is able to do it does not make them an expert! Do you remember when you were a child who knew everything?

## ***Backup!***

---

When all else fails, and all your valuable data have been encrypted or your computer completely destroyed by a virus, there is one sure way of recovering your data: from backup.

For this to work you need to ensure that your backup is recent (that is: after any important changes, and for many businesses that means at least once a day) and that it worked! I have over the years tried to help many clients whose backup did not work for one of many reasons. There is nothing more pitiable than seeing a client who had backed up all her data files onto old floppy discs only to find that they were unreadable.

Another client used one backup floppy disc instead of the two which MYOB had asked for then wondered where her data had disappeared. Another client lost all her data because she did not insert a new backup floppy disc when requested: she just pressed *Enter* each time the program asked for a new floppy. As she said, *the backup seemed to work so I did not worry!*

The moral of these stories is that you need a backup for when things go wrong, and you need to know before things go wrong that your backup system is working. Anything less than this is asking for trouble, and trouble usually comes when you ask for it!

## ***Backup Programs***

---

Over the years I have used and recommended many different backup programs. Some of these programs would only backup to floppy discs so another program was needed when data were saved onto optical media: CDs and DVDs. Sometimes it was important to be able to compress, or *zip*, backups to save space: again only some backup programs would do this.

Now that USB sticks and external hard discs are cheap and readily available I recommend only one program: SyncBack. This program does everything that I and my clients need so it is the program which I recommend and use.

If you do not have a working backup solution please download, install, setup and **USE** this program to keep your data safe from a catastrophe.

---

**Further Information**

---

Avast	<a href="http://www.avast.com">www.avast.com</a>
AVG	<a href="http://www.avgfree.com.au">www.avgfree.com.au</a>
Avira	<a href="http://www.avira.com">www.avira.com</a>
Bitdefender	<a href="http://www.bitdefender.com.au">www.bitdefender.com.au</a>
Comodo	<a href="http://www.antiviris.comodo.com">www.antiviris.comodo.com</a>
MSE	<a href="http://www.microsoft.com/mse">www.microsoft.com/mse</a>
Panda	<a href="http://www.cloudantivirus.com">www.cloudantivirus.com</a>
Baidu	<a href="http://www.antivirus.baidu.com">www.antivirus.baidu.com</a>
Immunet	<a href="http://www.immunet.com">www.immunet.com</a>
Malwarebytes	<a href="http://www.malwarebytes.org">www.malwarebytes.org</a>
Spybot	<a href="http://www.safer-networking.org">www.safer-networking.org</a>
SUPERAntiSpyware	<a href="http://www.superantispyware.com">www.superantispyware.com</a>
SyncBack	<a href="http://www.2brightsparks.com">www.2brightsparks.com</a>