

# Maintaining and Protecting Your Computer

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Today our computers are under attack from viruses, ad-ware and spyware. Protecting our computers requires the use of Anti-Adware and Anti-Spyware software. Keeping our internet browser programs and Operating Systems, (O.S.) updated is essential. Educating ourselves to what kinds of dangers are lurking on the internet and what to do about it is increasingly important.

## **Computer Viruses: Dangerous**

- A program or piece of code that is loaded on your computer without your consent or knowledge.
- Designed to inflict damage and/or render the computer unusable at least.
- May re-format hard drives/ May delete files.
- May use your computer as a laboratory to reproduce itself to attack other computers.

### **Solution: Load an anti-virus program. (AV) Load only one instance of AV software.**

- Purchased AV products come with telephone support and limited updates.
- Free AV software comes without support and unlimited updates.
- You can download free versions at [www.free.grisoft.com/](http://www.free.grisoft.com/) and [www.avast.com/eng/download-avast-home.html](http://www.avast.com/eng/download-avast-home.html) .

## **Adware: Annoying**

- Programs that are loaded onto your computer without your knowledge or consent.
- Collects information about the kind of websites you visit sends that information to its writers.
- Sends pop up advertisements and email to your computer.
- May change your browser's homepage.
- May add toolbars-search engines without your consent.
- Slows opening or accessing of Programs.

**Solution: Load an anti-adware or combination anti-adware/spyware program.**

- Purchased anti-adware products come with telephone support and limited updates.
- Free anti-adware software comes without support and unlimited updates.

You can download free versions at [www.download.com](http://www.download.com) .

**Spyware: Dangerous**

- Programs that are loaded onto your computer without your knowledge or consent.
- Collects personal information such as credit card numbers stored on your computer.
- Tracks where the user goes on the web and records keystrokes..
- May scan hard drives
- Reports what it finds to its writers.

**Solution: Load an anti-spyware or combination of anti-adware/ spyware program.**

- Purchased anti-spyware products come with telephone support and limited updates.
- Free anti-spyware software comes without support and unlimited updates.

Unlike AV software, you can and should run more than one kind of anti-adware and anti-spyware software. Different Anti Adware/Spyware products detect

You can download free version of “Ad-aware 2008” at [www.download.com](http://www.download.com) .

A free version of Spyware Doctor (combination anti adware/spyware) is available at [pack.google.com](http://pack.google.com).

**Update Windows O. S., IE Browser, and MS Office.**

- Operating Systems, Internet Browsers, E-Mail software, and office suite software require periodic updates.
- Click on “**Help**” at the top of the program window and then click on “**Check For Updates**”.

## **Firewalls**

Firewalls are designed to stand as a protective guard between a computer and the internet. Firewalls may be hardware based or software based. Firewalls in general can be set to one of three levels of security. For instance the Firewall that comes with Windows XP can be set to “On”, “On with exceptions”, or to “Off”.

Many software programs have legitimate reasons for conducting two-way communication between a home computer and a computer that is part of the World Wide Web or Internet. Examples include online banking services, anti-virus, and other software programs that require constant updates. Firewall software can be set by the user to allow two-way communication between the computer and websites specified by the user. The Microsoft Firewall is free and included in Service Pack 2 for Windows XP.

The free version of Zone Labs' firewall, is available at:

[www.zonelabs.com/store/content/catalog/products/sku\\_list\\_zs.jsp?dc=12bms&ctry=US&lang=en&lid=db\\_topnav\\_zass](http://www.zonelabs.com/store/content/catalog/products/sku_list_zs.jsp?dc=12bms&ctry=US&lang=en&lid=db_topnav_zass) .

## **E-Mail Concerns**

Junk/Spam E-mail, Phishing, and E-Mail Infected with Viruses.

- Never buy anything from an unsolicited e-mail message. These are potentially fraudulent websites.
- Do not click on links embedded in the junk mail message. This verifies your e-mail address is current.
- Never update account information from a link in an e-mail message. Companies such as Banks, Credit Card companies, etc. will never ask for you to update your information by clicking on a link embedded in the e-mail. If you need to update your personal information, go directly to the website u
- Investigate how to use the spam filters contained in your e-mail software.
- Use separate e-mail filtering software or e-mail filtering service.
- Check that your Anti-Virus software scans your e-mail. This is usually the default setting.
- Do not open mail attachments, unless you know the sender.

## **Internet Filters/Blocking Websites**

The internet can bring both good and bad things. Taking steps to protect you and your family from inappropriate websites concerns all of us.

- Hardware and software solutions for filtering websites.
- Filtered on computer by software- Customer Support with updates for duration of contract.
- Filtered by Server maintained by Service. Customer Support and provider updates their Server.
- Do the research. Ask friends what has worked for them.

## **Strategies for Making Yourself a Lesser Target**

### **Viruses –**

- Do not download “Free Games” from the internet. Most will load spyware/adware.
- Do not load file sharing software: i.e. Limewire, Kaaza, and BearShare. This type of software can lay your computer open to the downloading of virus infected files.

### **Spam and Junk E-mail –**

- Use a different e-mail software, such as Thunderbird (Mozilla), IncrediMail, etc.
- Create a new e-mail account strictly for family and friends to write to you.
- Create a new e-mail account to use at websites that require an e-mail address as part of the registration process. Utilize the junk/spam e-mail controls built into your e-mail program.

### **Internet Browsers – Use an Internet Browser other than Microsoft’s “Internet Explorer”.**

- Mozilla Firefox – [www.mozilla.com](http://www.mozilla.com)
- Opera – [www.opera.com](http://www.opera.com)