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Keeping your Computer Safe and Secure - The Golden Rules

Install Antivirus Software and keep it up to date

Running an antivirus program doesn't have to cost the earth. There are several very effective free Antivirus programs available for download. Once you have installed the software it should be updated daily. Many Antivirus programs will do this automatically but check to make sure it is happening.

Install Anti Spyware Software and keep it up to date

Your Antivirus program may also include a Spyware scanner, we would recommend you also install a dedicated program. Beware of internet adverts telling you your computer is infected and offering to install Anti-Spyware often these are Spyware programs themselves trying to trick you into installing them. Always choose an Anti-Spyware program based on a recommendation from someone you know.

Turn on the Windows Firewall

Windows XP & Vista include a very effective Firewall that blocks unauthorised access from other computers on the internet. Even if your Third Party Security programs include a software firewall often these can cause more problems than they solve and we would recommend disabling any Third Party firewall and using the Windows Firewall.

Don't click on links in e-mails

E-mail links can hide their true destination from you so you don't always know where they are taking you. Unless you know and trust the sender never click on links in e-mails.

Don't open e-mail attachments

Even if you know and trust the sender of an attachment be very careful how you handle attachments. Many viruses spread themselves through attachments without the sender being aware. If you receive an e-mail with an attachment that you are not expecting then confirm the contents with the sender before you open it.

Don't use HTML in e-mail

Many e-mail programs show e-mails as if they were a webpage. Which means they will run any scripts contained in the webpage, which could be potentially harmful. This feature can be turned off so that all e-mails can be previewed as plain text.

Don't use Internet Explorer

Internet Explorer is prone to many security attacks, using an alternative browser to view the Internet will help protect you from most of these.

Turn on Automatic Updates

Microsoft regularly release patches to Windows that fix known security problems. Turning on Automatic Updates will ensure that you get these as soon as they are available.

Recommended free security programs

AVG Antivirus - www.free.grisoft.com
Spybot Search & Destroy Anti-Spyware - www.safer-networking.de
Opera Web Browser - www.opera.com

AntiVir Antivirus - www.free-av.com
Adaware Anti-Spyware - www.lavasoft.com
Firefox Web Browser - www.getfirefox.com