

Basic Internet Security

(Mike W) 1/1/2004

1) **AntiVirus**: Single most important thing to have on your PC. There are MANY different vendors. I prefer Kaspersky (most probably have never heard of them, that does not mean they are not the BEST out there). Antivirus is only as good as your last update. Having an AV from 2001 that has not been updated in 3 years is worse then not having one at all (because you think you are protected when you are not). If you are not willing to pay for a commercial AV solution, there are several free ones available.

www.grisoft.com and www.avast.com both offer free versions with FREE updates.

Although probably not as good as a paid for version, they are MUCH better then nothing and do a relatively good job.

www.kaspersky.com is what I personally use on all my machines @ home.

Remember to set them to auto update, then manually check they it is updated each time you use your PC. I can not stress how important this is. You figure it is basic stuff, but if it were, then viruses wouldn't be running around as rampant as they are.

Also make sure real time protection is enabled and ALWAYS running. I also recommend a full manual scan @ least 1x per week in middle of night when PC is not in use.

2) **FIREWALL//ROUTER**: This is a MUST have for anyone with a broadband Cable/DSL connection. Primary use of an inexpensive home type router (\$50 range, NOT the \$10k Cisco, Foundry boxes) is to share a broadband internet connection with more then 1 PC and also to network multiple PC's together. I highly recommend that EVERYONE get one of these even if you only have 1 PC in your house. The device itself acts as a natural barrier between the big, bad internet and your PC. It basically acts to block everything coming in from the Internet to your network or PC that wasn't initiated from within your network. If you have a router and had it configured properly, you would never have been hit by blaster or sasser worms.

Software firewalls like Zone Alarm, etc are good too, but they can be shut down VERY easily and leave you unprotected. Shut down a router or hardware firewall, you have no connection and are therefore safe by default. Software firewalls are also good for alerting you to programs trying to access the internet from your PC (like a Trojan), but you REALLY need to educate yourself on how they work or you are wasting your time.

3) **Anti Spyware**: The fastest growing problem on the internet. Spyware or adware are 3rd party programs that are usually installed when you download and install those nice free little programs off of the internet. They can do everything from track your browsing habits and send them back to the companies server, send back passwords and keystrokes back to a server, cause a tremendous amount of Pop ups to appear on your computer. Act as a spyware server to send pop ups to other people. They cause a tremendous amount of drag on your PC resources. Think of it as not running your boat for 3 weeks straight because of rain and all of the barnacles and sludge that has built up on your hull and prop dragging you down. Since most of them auto load @ startup, they can weigh you down severely. This is the # 1 reason why people say their PC's come crawling to a halt after they have only had it for 2 months.

Fortunately, there are 3 GREAT freeware programs to help.

1) **Spyware Blaster**- www.javacoolsoftware.com

Download and install this program (current version is 3.2). This will create registry entries that will prevent MANY forms of spyware from loading onto your PC. After initial installation, click on update and update it. Then make sure you have ALL protection enabled. Check this program 1x per week for updates and make sure you enable all protection after you update. This uses NO resources as it does not run in the background. It only sets flags in your systems registry to prevent certain changes from being made by SPYWARE.

2) **Ad-Aware**- www.lavasoftusa.com (current version is SE 1.05)

This is something like an on demand virus scan only it will scan for adware and spyware. Download, install, update and run this program. After the scan is finished (few mn) it will alert you to critical problems. Select these problems, then click next to rid yourself of them. They update frequently (and there is no auto update as it is on demand only), so I HIGHLY suggest **updating** and running this 3xs per week as they update frequently.

Do not be surprised to see over 150 items identified if you have been using a computer for a while and have never used this program. For the record, the most I have seen is 1200+ (yep, PC almost unusable @ that point).

3) **Spybot Search and Destroy**- [Spybot - Search & Destroy - The home of Spybot-S&D!](#)

This is similar in function to Ad-Aware. It is an on demand scanner that is updated frequently. After initial download, update the program. Click on the immunize button on the left side of the screen. It will tell you what is blocked and what else can be blocked (this function of the program is similar to SpywareBlaster) Click the green + button on top to make sure everything is blocked. After that, click the Spybot button on the upper left and click scan for problems. After it is finished scanning, it will auto check all of the BAD problems. Click fix problems to rid yourself of that spyware. This is another program with frequent updates, so I recommend doing it 2xs per week. Remember, both of these programs are only as good as their last update (like Anti Virus), so MAKE SURE you update frequently.

Ad-Aware and Spybot are very similar in function, but they do have different databases so they find different things. They compliment each other well and are both free, so use them both. Please do not run both at the same time.

4) **Windows Updates**- The final piece to the puzzle. Windows Critical updates typically come out on the 2nd Monday of every month now. I suggest setting your computer to auto update to at least alert when they issue new ones. IT IS VERY IMPORTANT TO TAKE THESE UPDATES!!!!!! An exploit is typically released within 2 weeks after a patch is issued by Microsoft, so DO NOT be one of the ones who are left vulnerable. M\$ issues them for a reason, so take them. ALSO, check for OFFICE updates if you use that software as well.

Follow this guide and you are guaranteed not to have a problem with Spyware and/or Virus/Trojan's on your PC. Get into that habit (ritual) of updating your AV and these 3 spyware programs on a VERY regular, weekly basis. It is also prudent that you practice sensible computing and not open attachments from ANYONE that you are not expecting. That is the leading way viruses are spread.

Please make sure any of this software you download and install from this information is compatible with your version of Windows, especially if you are running anything older than Win95/98.