



Good Day

I was inspired by one of my client's clippings this month. He handed me the Technology section of the Wall Street Journal which discussed all kinds of security and malware issues. I couldn't help myself and had to share my version of the same.

Featured Notes:

- It's a WAR out there!
- This Month on Evtechie
- Techie Tip

!! It is a WAR out there !!

This week dozens of clients and businesses were affected by the latest worm running rampant on their networks and computers. Essentially, back door vulnerabilities turn up on our systems, and we aren't aware until Microsoft starts pushing out patches and our antivirus software fanatically updates itself over the course of a few days. What's that? Not sure what I mean?



The latest worms, nicknamed Sasser and Netsky exploit vulnerabilities in our operating system. There are TWO kinds of software on your machine

1. **System Software** - which specifically allows you to interact with the hardware and software you install on your system. Windows XP is system software- without it you can do little but stare at a black screen with a little flashing cursor awaiting manual instructions. System software incorporates utilities to maintain your system, customization features, and all kinds of other bells and whistles that please us.
2. **Application Software** - These include all the productivity software we love to install. Generally speaking, our systems can run without application software, but we use applications to word process, e-mail, create power points and spreadsheets, edit images, maintain databases, etc.

So returning to the idea of "vulnerabilities- Microsoft occasionally discovers small holes in the security of their operating system - often

times by hackers trying hard to exploit problems. When a security issue arises we promptly hear from Microsoft with the infamous bubble that lets us know NEW UPDATES ARE AVAILABLE TO INSTALL! If your system never tells you that, then you have a problem! Windows should occasionally go out and check for updates, urging us to install them. I always recommend installing updates.

Since my system had the latest updates, I wasn't affected by the Sasser Worm. Systems without updates were suddenly interrupted with a "memory exception error" message, then quickly told they were going to be shut down in :59...:58....:57...:56.... (you get the picture.)

So, now you are wondering why I would start this short article with the notice: It's a WAR out there! When I am not talking politics, right?

Protecting your system is almost becoming a daily battle. Fortunately, we have people out there that help us with that in the way of antivirus and firewalls. Nevertheless, having some computing savvy can save your identity, security, finances, and computer investment.

1. Educate yourself about maintaining your system.
2. Keep your system up to date.
3. Renew your antivirus subscription EVERY YEAR!!
4. Invest in a firewall (there are wonderful free ones TOO!!)
5. Be attentive to Microsoft Updates, or work them manually by going to **Internet Explorer** → **Tools** → **Windows Update** and let Microsoft scan your system for necessary "Critical Updates".
6. If you visit a web site that suddenly asks you if you "agree" to the licensing or want to make their site your "homepage" click NO or cancel! (Some sites ask you to agree or "trust" their site, but likely you have requested the site to perform a task for you to start with- like Microsoft's Update).
7. If you are getting an extraordinary amount of pop-ups, it is time to run a spyware removal utility and check your system for spyware or malware.
8. Don't get fooled by cute-sie little tidbits that web sites offer you. Applications like Gator, Bonzi Buddy and pretty screen savers can also come equipped with enough spyware to have your head spinning the next time you try to surf the net. Read the EULA (End User License Agreement) during the install and look out for clues that they are giving you more than what you ask for (third-party software, permission to share, etc.)
9. If it sounds TOO GOOD to be TRUE, it **ALWAYS** is. Stay away from web sites and e-mails that suggest some quick money making or winning opportunity. In fact **NEVER** buy from or visit web sites that advertise via E-MAIL or POP-UPS unless you are a current consumer with them.

This Month on Evtechie.com...

Expanding on the article you have read, I define the Geek-Speak terms like spyware, malware, trojan. Don't know what they mean? Go visit [Evtechie!](#)

TechieTip...**Installing a Firewall...**

A Firewall is a simple utility that virtually "hides" your system when connected to the internet, and keeps track of all the internet requests coming both in and out of your computer. A wonderful FREE firewall tool can be found at the following website.

http://smb.sygate.com/products/spf_standard.htm

Just remember that a firewall has to learn your "surfing" habits, and will be a chronic nag until you train it. It will ask you to give permission to any application that seeks a connection to a network or the internet. If you have my favorite antivirus (PcCillin) it will come equipped with it's own firewall. Wondering if you need a firewall?? Well, if you have high speed access like DSL, or Road Runner, you should be running a firewall!

Coming Next Time

Your Virtual Desktop- how messy it it? How to manage the junk on your desktop and find what you need!

Until then, I thank you for your continued support and wish you a Merry May!

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Knowledge is Power...
