

SECURITY

- ✘ I want to summarize some of the presentations on “Security” given by various members over the past few years. I want to thank those people for their time and effort. Any errors or omissions are mine and should not reflect on those who have gone before.

SECURITY

- ✘ Most intrusions now come from the Internet. I will restrict this discussion to avoiding those intrusions.
- ✘ There are other possibilities, such as and unauthorized person gaining physical access to your computer or even stealing it. I will not say much about those possibilities.

TOOLS

- 1) Firewall (real time)
- 2) Virus Protection (real time)
- 3) Malware Detection (manual)
- 4) Encryrption (manual)

There are other ways to discuss security tools – this is a good start.

FIREWALLS

These setup a barrier to keep intruders from:

- 1) Taking control of your computer without your help or
- 2) Having your computer send information out without your knowledge; so called “phone home” programs.



WINDOWS FIREWALL

Windows 7 and Windows 8

Very good firewall. You can spend time customizing these but even if you use the defaults, you are OK.

Windows Vista

Not quite as good but not bad.
Most people want to dump Vista.

Windows XP

Good OS over all; lousy Firewall.
Dump XP or get another Firewall.



OTHER FIREWALLS

Symantec (used to be Norton) has quite an array of tools, most of which combine a Firewall with Virus Protection. Their products are pretty good but they are expensive and VERY hard to remove.

If you are careful, you can get free programs which are just as good.

JUST BE CAREFUL – There is a lot of junk out there.



Virus Protection

Microsoft Security Essentials

This is very good and it is FREE

From the beginning of the Internet until a few years ago, Microsoft was terrible about security. MS built in defaults which let everyone in with NO security. They wanted to attract companies who wanted access to your computer. OK for legitimate companies, not so well for consumers.

MS Essentials came from nowhere and is very good.

Virus Protection

Virus Protection has to work in real time; i.e. checks programs as you download them. Then you need to tell it to check your whole computer periodically; at least once a week. You need to keep the program data updates.

MS Essentials works in the background when it notices that your computer is not being used and updates itself. It is better, in that respect, than any similar program I have seen. They will interrupt you; MSE will not.

Microsoft Security Essentials

If you know what you are doing and want some other Virus Protection, fine. I will not argue.

Unless you are very brave, just use *MSE*.

If you are downloading a program, MSE should scan it automatically. However, you can right click the link and have MSE scan it. This is the safest way. I don't do it.

MALWARE DETECTION

- ✘ This is probably a matter of personal choice. I certainly will not argue with anyone's choice. For me and several people I respect, Malwarebytes is the best. Get the free version and avoid downloading other programs offered.
- ✘ Ccleaner is a similar program. Nice features, not completely automatic like Malwarebytes.

ENCRYPTION

- ✘ This is a subject in its own right. This can protect your files even if someone steals them. We had an excellent presentation on this at a previous meeting.
- ✘ If I want your information bad enough (e.g. buy a \$300 program) and I get your file, I can read it. Most crooks will not go to all that trouble.

Practical Hints

UPDATE

Update your Operating System regularly. I set my Windows Update to tell me when updates are available and manually decide what to accept. I accept 95% of those offered. I subscribe to Windows Secrets and heed their warnings.

Update your Browser. I think all browsers will update automatically. Internet Explorer 10 is out. Don't install it for a while – wait for the experts to work out the bugs.

Browsers

The popular ones are Internet Explorer, Firefox, Chrome and Opera. Mac has Safari. All of these have various Add-ons or 'Helper' Applications. The most famous of these are Adobe Flash and Shockwave. They also have helpers for Adobe Reader (or Acrobat) and Java

Flash has had security problems. If you use it, UPDATE!!!

Adobe Reader and Acrobat have been bad-mouthed at club meetings. I think these are still your best bet for pdf.

Java is riddled with problems. Disable it. Keep it updated in case you run into a situation where you must have it.

Windows Media Player

This is typical of the 'old' Microsoft. It is notoriously virus-prone.

My guess is that this is used by thieves who steal copyrighted music and video. That gang runs with the virus nuts. Download illegally enough and you will get a virus – guaranteed.

Unfortunately, if you use WMP you tend to get the tail end of that group. An excellent alternative is Videolan (or VLC) which is free and much more versatile than Windows Media Player.

Winding Up

Common sense and a little caution go a long way.

Look at the address bar in your browser. I can not believe how many people hide this. Make sure the website you are looking at is really the one you think it is.

Set Windows so it shows the extension on a file. If you want a pdf file make sure it ends in .pdf. If it ends in .exe, it is a virus.

Plug-ins: For Firefox or Chrome type “about:plugins” and keep them up-to-date.

Look in Control Panel: Programs and make sure who really want what is installed on your computer.

SECURITY -MORE INFORMATION

- ✘ <https://windowssecrets.com/newsletter/security-alert-bogus-tech-support-phone-calls/#story5>
- ✘ This link goes into greater detail about security with sophisticated techniques such as hardware-level passwords.