

July 2005 Newsletter

Well, I am trying to get this newsletter out before I go on vacation. I will be out of town from Wednesday, July 27th until Wednesday, August 3. If you agree to pray for good weather, I will pray that you don't have any computer problems while I am away.

By now most computer users understand the importance and need to have some form of antivirus software running on their computer. Unfortunately, this is no longer enough. Even though there are still many viruses out there to worry about, the big problem now is spyware and pop-up ads. The majority of my service calls are related to pop-up ads and slow computer performance. Many of these problems could be prevented by installing a few FREE programs and 15 minutes per week of your time.

What is Spyware and Adware?

I am sure you all have heard of many of these terms; Spyware, Adware and Malware. We don't need to get into all the details and differences between them, but what you need to know is that there are many small programs that get installed on your computer, usually without your knowledge, that are designed to do any of the following:

- Track your internet activity
- Present you with pop-up ads
- Steal your identity
- Track your passwords
- Change your home page

Most of them simply track your internet activity and then send you ads based on your history. Others keep taking you to their website every time you go online. A few of them are designed to steal your passwords or account information. Most everyone has a few of these on their computer and they may cause the occasional pop-up ad but for the most part are not a real problem. But what happens over time is that your computer may have dozens of these little programs running in the background, each trying to track your activity, reporting back to their owners and trying to take you to their preferred websites. Your computer finally can't handle any more and comes to a grinding halt.

How do they get installed on my computer?

These programs get installed on your computer through various websites, clicking on a link in an email, downloading free programs and sharing music and videos. Mistyping the name of a website or clicking too quickly on the wrong place in ads can also install some of these problems.

For example: A program that I often see on many computers is called WeatherBug. This nifty little program displays your current temperature on your task bar next to your clock and gives you access to full weather reports instantly by clicking on the icon. If you install the free version, you are agreeing to receive ads from them and that is how they get paid for the service. If you don't want the ads, you will have to pay for the program.

How do I protect my computer?

The first line of defense is to be careful where you go on the internet and watch what you click on. Avoid clicking on links within emails or going to unfamiliar websites and be careful

typing web addresses. The most common cause is downloading free music or games from sites like Kazaa or LimeWire. Paying for music through iTunes is not a problem. The other common source is accepting offers for special Internet Search tools and Search bars.

Free Programs to Eliminate the Problems

There are several Free Programs that if you don't already have installed, you should download and run. These will help eliminate and prevent future problems. Each program is capable of finding different problems, so it is recommended to install and run all three. The ones that I recommend are:

1. SpyBot Search and Destroy - <http://www.spybot.info/en/index.html>
2. Ad-aware SE Personal - <http://lavasoft.com>
3. Microsoft AntiSpyware beta - <http://www.microsoft.com>

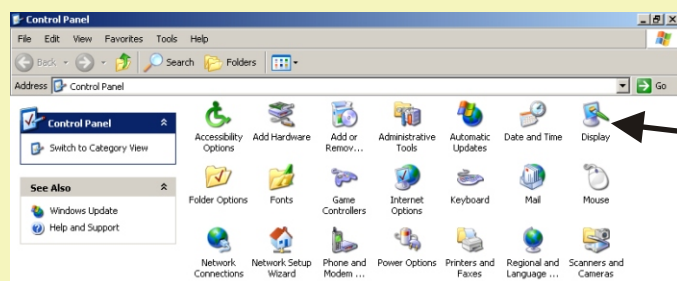
You can also get any of these from Cnet's website, <http://www.download.com>. Once you download and install any of these, you must click on update to get the most recent versions before running the scanners. You should update and run all of these once every week or two. If you have any question please call or contact me at dana@waylandcomputer.com

Windows XP Tip of the Month

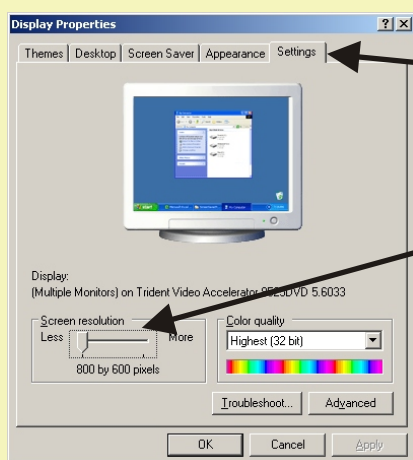
Changing your display resolution can be one of the fastest ways to improve the usability of your computer. The resolution setting dictates the size and amount of information you can see on your screen at one time. If you find that you are having difficulty seeing the text on your screen you may want to reduce the screen resolution which will increase the text size. If size is not a problem but you want to be able to see more information on your screen without having to scroll back and forth, try increasing the resolution.

Instructions

1. From the Start Menu, click on CONTROL PANEL



2. Double Click on the Display Icon



3. Click on the Settings Tab.
4. Move the Screen Resolution Slider with your mouse to change the resolution. Click on Apply and then OK. You can go back anytime to readjust the settings to your individual needs or likes.

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