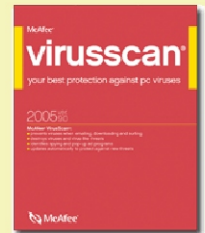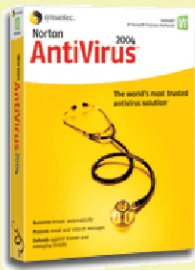# WaylandZComputer.com
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October 2005 Newsletter

Happy Halloween! By now, school or work is in full swing and it's time to start thinking about the holidays. With everything you have to do, I am sure that the last thing on your mind is the condition of your computer. People are using their computers more than normal this time of year and the last thing you need over the holidays are computer problems. Take some time now to check your antivirus software expiration date, ink and paper supplies. It is also a good time to run spyscan software, delete unused programs and perform some maintenance.

FREE Security Software?

I don't think I have to discuss the importance of Antivirus, AntiSpyware and Firewall software, but what many don't know is that in most cases you don't need to fork over $40-$80 per computer or pay those annual renewal fees to be protected anymore. There are many excellent FREE software products available to the home user. However, if you are running a business, you are out of luck. In addition to some of the free alternatives that I have listed in the past such as AVG Antivirus, AdAware and Spybot, many internet service providers are now offering free services. **For example:** If you are using **Comcast** as your internet provider, you are now entitled to Free McAfee Antivirus, McAfee Firewall and their Spyware tools. If you are using **AOL**, they also offer a full suite of Internet security products from McAfee for Free. Check with your own internet service provider for details. For those of you with college students, many Universities offer Antivirus software to all students, again free for the asking. If you use your computer to connect to your office, you may find that your company offers free software as well.

What Security Software Do You Really Need?

At the very least, everyone should have Antivirus software and one AntiSpyware program. I recommend that every computer that is connected to the internet has the following:

Antivirus Software

Norton Antivirus and McAfee are the two most popular brands, but there are some others that perform just as well if not better. AVG by Grisoft is one of my favorites and they have a free version for home use. *Note: You should only have one antivirus software installed on your computer at a time. You should uninstall any previous versions before installing a new brand or version.*

Adware and Spyware removal programs

Unlike the antivirus programs, you should have <u>more than one</u> Spyware/Adware removal tool installed on your computer. Each program will typically find and remove problems that the other did not find. In the Free category, I recommend installing:

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 questions please call or contact me at dana@waylandcomputer.com.

Firewall (Hardware or Software)

There are several types of firewalls available to protect against malicious attacks on your computer. A hardware firewall is one that is built-in to many broadband routers that connect your computer to your network or broadband modem. Norton and McAfee both have what they call internet security packages that include a software firewall. ZoneAlarm has an excellent firewall and also has a free home version. At the very minimum, Windows does have a built-in firewall but it is nowhere near as good as some of the others and only looks at incoming events.

Optional Email Spam Filter

If you are having problems with sorting through tons of spam that arrives in your inbox, there are many programs that can help. If you happen to have Office 2003 on your computer and you are using Outlook (not Outlook Express), you already have a good spam filter. For those of you using Norton Antivirus, versions 2005 and above now include spam protection. There are also some separate spam filters that you can download and install. Another option is to use an outside source such as Vanquish Labs. They will filter your mail before it even gets to you for about $24 per year.

Reminder! BACKUP YOUR DATA

With the increasing amount of information being stored on our computers, the problems associated with backing up are growing. Many home computers now contain 1000's of irreplaceable digital photos, music, email and data that could all be lost in a flash. All it takes is a hard drive failure or a power outage at just the wrong time to loose everything. There are many options now available for backing up your data on a regular basis. Whether you are backing up to CD's, USB Flash Drives or even using an online service, now is the time evaluate your needs and put a backup plan into effect. **DON'T WAIT UNTIL IT HAPPENS TO YOU!** There are some great products out there that can simplify and take the worry out of backing up your data. One of my favorites is the Mirra backup system. This external network device can backup all your computers in the house. www.mirra.com

WINTER IS COMING!

Now that winter is just around the corner, you might want to think about protecting yourself from those annoying and potentially damaging power failures that usually come with every snow storm. Every time your computer shuts off abruptly, due to a power failure, you are risking the possibility of damaging your computer or even losing all your data. There is a simple solution to this problem. It is call a UPS (Uninterruptible Power Supply). These units can look similar to an oversize power strip, but contain a battery that will run your computer during a brownout or loss of power.

$149.99
600 Watts

$29.99
185 watts -
Good for one
small computer
and LCD
monitor

Early UPS systems originally cost hundreds of dollars but you can now get a small UPS system for as low as $29. A UPS is no longer a luxury item and is a must for any computer system.