

Protecting Your Computer

Has your computer been compromised? Does it appear that someone 'out there' has cracked into your computer? Protecting Your Computer.

"If an account (AOL, MSN, Yahoo, any Internet website) seems to be compromised, immediately change the password, of course changing to a strong password with random letters and numbers. Also change any other account that uses e-mail address / same AOL (or MSN, Yahoo, etc.) password, since those accounts can easily be compromised also. I suggest using different passwords for every logon. There are a number of inexpensive or free programs to keep track of your passwords. I use an IronKey (ironkey.com) since I am truly paranoid but use "Keepass" (keepass.info) for the rest of my family.

My other recommendations for Windows users:

- a) Make sure your XP or Vista automatic update's are turned on and set for automatic. This is the absolutely the most important step. Malware tends to exploit browser or operating system vulnerabilities. Note that often malware will turn off automatic updates once the malware is on a system.**
- b) Ensure that you have a relatively new security suite from a recognized security company (ask your computer knowledgeable friends for a suggestion since there are lots of the fake security software on the Internet). The security suite should include protection against spyware and viruses as well as a PC-based firewall. You need to buy a new security suite at least every two years since the protection technology is regularly updated. Make sure that if you have a security suite that it has a current subscription and it is updating itself regularly. You can buy an individual anti-spyware, anti-virus, and firewall products but for the average PC user a suite is best. I use ESet Smart Security**

(Error! Hyperlink reference not valid. **Kaspersky**
www.kaspersky.com) on my home PCs.

- c) Make sure you have the latest updates to any program that touches the Internet. Key products would be Adobe Acrobat/Flash (**www.adobe.com**), Apple iTunes/Quicktime (**www.apple.com**), and Java (**www.java.com**) . These programs regularly have security patches that must be installed. New versions automatically check for updates.

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