

ASK THE COMPUTER SURGEON

Does it Pay to Pay? What Security Software Should I Use?

This is the third article on the series on Internet Threats. These “threats” (the risk of having your identification stolen and abused) keep the act of going online a risky and ever growing, dangerous venture. We want to make you aware of the danger and teach you to protect your computer and your identification.

The following is a question of the average internet user: *“I’m using free software from (Ad-Aware) and (SpyBot) for spyware detection, (Avast) for virus protection, and (Comodo) for a firewall, is there any advantage to switching to a full security suite? Why pay for what I can get for free?”*

Good question! Let’s see if we can bring insight into an ever increasing scope of security solutions. Let’s address this for the typical internet user. The answer to the above question is that while SpyBot, Ad-Aware, and other such free programs were admirable for their early work at spyware protection, they just haven’t kept up with the modern world. There are better free choices (see our website for a current list – <http://www.compusergeon.com/>). Now don’t go running off to start downloading all the free stuff just yet. Consumer Reports (September 2007) indicated that the “best of the free security software available online didn’t perform as well as the best for-pay programs...” (pg.35). One can achieve security with the various separate free programs. Compared to the for-pay, all-in-one suites that run on their own, YOU will have to manage the myriad of free security programs and hope that they play nicely with one another, which they don’t necessarily do. So, now you must add more time to research what programs work with what programs. If you still want the “free” stuff you must promise to watch over your computer and its connected empire, be faithful in the many daily updates, routinely disconnect from the internet when not on-line, run multiple scans for all your security programs every week, and be dogmatic in preserving the peace between the little darlings without compromising the integrity of protection.

If committing to that kind of diligence over your PC is too much work, then it might be a good idea to think about the various all-in-one ‘protection’ suites available to purchase. Detailed below is a list Consumer Reports produced to identify products they tested, also found in the September 2007 issue (pg.36): They are ranked in order of effectiveness:

1. Trend Micro (PC-cillin Internet Security 2007) \$50
2. Check Point (ZoneAlarm Internet Security Suite 7.0) \$50
3. McAfee (Total Protection 2007) \$80
4. McAfee (Internet Security Suite 2007) \$70
5. Microsoft (Live OneCare) \$50, BitDefender (Internet Security 10) \$60
6. F-Secure (Internet Security 2007) \$60

A word of advice on these suites; their purpose is to take the labor out of watching over your computer. As a result, they tend to be a bit heavy on the computers resources. We recommend at least 1 gigabyte of memory (RAM) to handle the extra load. Without it, you risk a slow performing PC.

In the next article, we will discuss: **How to Remove the Bugs**. Until then, please practice ‘safe-surfing’!