

Important Security Tips

By Erica M. Hauck

Perfect Computer Solutions, Inc.

"Human history becomes more and more a race between education and catastrophe." - H. G. Wells

Security Issues facing businesses today are very different than even a few years ago. More and more private data is being stored electronically, including everything from personal bank accounts to a business storing customer credit card information. Keeping that data private is important. Are these tips failsafe? No.

Unfortunately the inventiveness of growing number of "Crackers" or more commonly known as "Hackers" makes security a daily vigilance. However, there are a number of simple things you can do to protect your data.

Setup and maintain a firewall – If you have high-speed Internet access you need to have a firewall. Even if you think you have no important data on the computer. It will cost far more in time and aggravation to fix the damage from the hacker than to purchase the firewall. There are essentially two options. Hardware or Software Firewalls. They both perform the same general function, to hide your computer from hackers, and prevent them

from breaking in. Hardware firewalls are a better choice for the average user, since it is a separate piece of equipment. A Software Firewall runs on your computer, and is a good choice for advanced computer users. However, it needs to be updated and patched on a regular basis.

Download and install Critical Updates for your Operating system and software on a regular basis. -

Many security holes are found and fixed by critical updates. Not installing Critical updates is like putting an ad in the local newspaper that you are going on vacation and leaving your house unlocked. Don't be surprised when you come home and find everything gone.

Choose better passwords

This includes making sure everyone that has access to the data does the same. If your user name is Sandy, using "Sandy" as a password is not a good idea, as the programs that hackers use to find passwords check dictionary terms. Ideally the password should be a random grouping of letters numbers and other characters. Unfortunately, most people cannot remember a password of "P4g\$st/ld", so choosing something you will remember is more practical. A better password is made up

by adding words and numbers together and by substituting numbers for letters in the word like the number "5" for the letter "s", you can take the phrase "Sounds good to me" which is easy to remember, and make the password "5oundsGood2me". Choose something you'll remember and be creative. Just make sure you add both numbers and letters.

Have different passwords for everything – that way if one password gets compromised the rest remain secure.

Let someone try to guess or crack your passwords. - Ask a knowledgeable person to check for vulnerabilities you are not aware of. Professionals are constantly getting new information about security.

By following these guidelines it will make it much harder for a hacker to compromise your data. Remember the best defense is a good offense.

