

Advice on Taming Your Unruly Computer

SAFE OUT OF THE BOX

New computers are often the most vulnerable to Internet and email-borne attacks. We Computer Tamers recommend that you buy your new computer from a store like ours who protects it before you get it. But if you choose to buy one online, over the phone, or at a super electronics store here are a few suggestions to keep it from getting messed up as it gets on the Internet.

Before you connect your new machine to the Internet, make sure it is protected by a firewall. We recommend having a router/firewall between your DSL or Cable modem and your computer(s). A router is often called a hardware firewall and is essential for safe computing. A professional quality router costs about \$90 - \$100. When you install your router and if it is a wireless one, make sure you secure it with encryption and password protection. It makes a lot of sense to have your network setup by a professional. But if you want to do it yourself, be sure to follow the directions that come with the router explicitly. If you run into trouble, call the router manufacturer for help.

If you dialup to the Internet, you may want to install a software firewall such as Zone Alarm. You can download it by going to our website for the link.

Make sure your computer is also patched with the latest Windows service packs and updates. Probably the computer was packed in its box month ago and since then essential updates have been released by Microsoft or Apple. To do the updates you will have to go on the Internet and take some risk. Before you get on the Internet start up your antivirus program and have it update immediately to protect the new system from viruses. Once you've done the antivirus update, you can then do the Windows or Apple updates. Be sure to do them all.

After your operating system is updated, you need to install your Anti-spyware programs. There may be one already installed on your new computer such as Ad-aware. If so, run it. If not, download Ad-aware and Spybot, install them and have them update their definitions. You can also install Microsoft Antispyware by going to the Microsoft website. If you are setting up an Apple, you are not at as much risk of getting spyware so you can skip this part of protecting your computer.

If you are giving a computer as a gift to a novice user, be sure get the computer ready for them so that they will not end up with a virus and spyware infected computer.

We Tamers often recommend Norton Antivirus for new computers, but if you can't afford Norton or if you are running an older slow computer, you can download and install AVG Antivirus. AVG is free and you can find the link to download it at our website www.TheComputerTamers.com/recommend.htm.

With Windows PC's or Apples, once you have the computer setup, updated and protected, you should setup user accounts for everyone who will be using the computer. You should only logon as the administrator when you are installing programs or doing maintenance. You should logon as a user when you are using the computer for word processing, Internet, email and most everything else.

Allen is one of JASAsolutions' Computer Tamers who host The Computer Club heard every Wednesday after the 5 o'clock news on WILI AM 14. You can learn more about getting your unruly computer under control by visiting www.TheComputerTamers.com and explore the free information compiled there for you. Be sure to visit the Computer Tamers Store at 197 Trumbull Hwy. Lebanon.



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