

Computer Bits by Mark Eggert of Raad One Network Solutions, Inc.

Welcome to Computer Bits, a series of articles on computers and network information. Because of the increasing concern for keeping your computers secure, I'll spend the next two articles on security.

The February 22, 2005 issue of PC Magazine had an article on security titled "a false sense of security" by Ben Z. Gottesman and Konstantinos Karagiannis which I used as a reference for this article. They start with the following quote, "To truly secure a PC, you have to unplug it and toss it into the ocean. Most users want a less drastic solution. But if you overdo it on the restrictions, your machine might as well be growing barnacles." They also state the 80% of consumers have adware or spyware on their home PCs. From my experience, a good many of them also have adware or spyware on their work computers.

They recommend, and I agree with, using intelligent tools and the following sensible extra steps:

1. **Turn it off.** That's right, turn off your computer when you're not using it! There is no point in offering your PC's ports to the internet while you're not using it. I would also add that you should make sure your firewall doesn't have any unneeded open ports.
2. **Lock it.** Secure Administrator-level accounts behind strong passwords (at least eight letters and numbers).
3. **Harden your wireless network.** Use WPA (Wi-Fi Protected Access) if possible, allow access to your compaines' MAC addresses only, and limit the number of IP addresses your router can assign. This is very important if you live close to your neighbors or are in a business park where your building is close to others. This is more important as new wireless equipment gives you more range from the base unit.
4. **Layer security.** Two firewalls or antivirus utilities will step on each other, but it's okay – even wise – to have two antispysware applications, because their accuracy isn't yet up to snuff. Set only one to scan files on access; this is how programs end up fighting.

Stay tuned for Part 2 in next month's newsletter.

April 3rd is the fifth anniversary for my business and as a Group Buying Partner. Therefore, I'm having an extra special on my flyer in the Spring Group Buying Partner mailing. Look for it in April.

If you have a computer or network question you'd like answered and you think others would like to know the answer too, please forward them to me. My email address is meggert@wi.rr.com, my phone number is 262-679-7704 and my fax number is 262-679-7664.