

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

Welcome to Computer Bits, a series of articles on computers and network information. Last night at the Group Buying Partner Expo I was asked about Open Office. Since I haven't heard much about it, I'll be doing some investigation into it and I'll write an article on it in the future.

Something I noticed on MSNBC.com today was an article about the threat of RATs (Remote Access Trojans) and how hackers are moving away from phishing and going toward using them. You may remember that I wrote about RATs in my June 2004 article and you may want to review that article. In case that you no longer have that newsletter you can see all of my articles on my website at [www.ronsi.com](http://www.ronsi.com).

It seems that these RATs will lay dormant on your computer until you access an online banking site that the RAT is watching for. It then wakes up and captures all keystrokes while you're at the site and sends them to the hacker. The interesting part is that the RAT doesn't try to infect other computers, so they're harder to detect.

Here are some tips to help fight off RATs.

1. Make sure you are using firewall and anti-virus software that is up to date and running. If you don't see their icons in the System Tray, find out why. Some viruses try to shutdown anti-virus software so that they're not detected.
2. Be careful where you surf on the net. Pornography, file-sharing, and other murky web sites are major sources for Trojans and viruses.
3. Resist the temptation to open or view any unexpected greeting cards that you get through email. This is a very easy way for some bad software to get installed on you computer.
4. If you do online bank, check to see if your bank is offering any additional security measures. U.S. Banks are required to have added security in place by next year, such as entering a PIN number by mouse clicks. Check with your bank to see what and when they'll have these measures in place. You may even want to hint at moving your money if you don't feel safe enough.

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](mailto:meggert@wi.rr.com), my phone number is 262-679-7704 and my fax number is 262-679-7664.