

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

Welcome to Computer Bits, a series of articles on computers and network information. This month we have a question is: Should I use Microsoft's new Windows Live OneCare?

You should know that Microsoft has a specific target market for Windows Live OneCare. And I would only recommend that you look into the product if you fit in the target market. First of all, the product only works on Windows XP with Service Pack 2. Second it is targetted for the home consumer and home office user. I will add that it is also for the small businesses with peer-to-peer networks. Third, the product's features work best for isolated computers. What I mean here are computers that while they may share a common internet connection with other computers, they are used as a separate island.

Windows Live OneCare includes antivirus, antispysware and firewall applications to protect your computer. It includes an automatic drive defragmenter, a drive cleanup tool and security updater to keep your computer performing well. To protect your data it has a backup and restore feature. You also get 24/7 online help. All of this for \$49.95/yr for up to three computers. Granted a number of these features are already in Windows XP, they are all enhanced versions. One thing you should be aware of is that you'll need to uninstall your current antivirus and firewall programs before you can install Windows Live OneCare.

So is Windows Live OneCare right for you? It is if you're in the target market. And it is well worth the cost even if you have only one computer. It's a real bargain if you have three computers! I would caution you to wait a bit on getting Windows Live OneCare until it has proven itself as some of the early reviews have noted some problems I feel Microsoft needs to fix. You should also be aware that both Symantec and McAfee are planning on similar product in late summer or early fall.

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.