

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 article will cover computer viruses and anti-virus programs.

First let me say that computer viruses are real and that anyone can get one on their computer whether they're connected to the internet or not. What are also real are computer virus hoaxes. Just like viruses, hoaxes can disrupt work and even damage computers.

Every computer needs to be protected from virus attacks. This can be in the form of anti-virus software running on the computer or virus scanning all files before they are copied to a computer. Two very good manufacturers of anti-virus software are Symantec Corporation with Norton Anti-Virus and Network Associates, Inc. with McAfee Anti-Virus. These companies actively search for new viruses and update their definition files once a week. They also have very good web sites that have virus libraries and hoax libraries for you to use to eliminate a virus or to determine if you just have a virus hoax.

If you are running anti-virus software, I recommend that you update the virus definition files at least once a month. If you're not running anti-virus software, I would recommend that you do. The effort spent on protecting yourself can greatly save you from disrupted or lost productivity.

Also, if you receive an email with an attachment from someone you don't know, don't open it but just delete it. Now there are some viruses that spread by attaching themselves to emails from friends or acquaintances. If you get one of these, hopefully your anti-virus software will catch it and not allow it to spread.

Should you have any questions about viruses, virus hoaxes, or anti-virus software, please contact me.