

Radio Days – 2009-02-14

Tip of the Week – Download then Install

Many people see a notification from a program (and Zonealarm is a prime example) saying that there is a later version so please download this updated version. The people who write programs like Zonealarm assume that you know to install after downloading. This week I saw a new client who had religiously downloaded the update for Zonealarm not once, not twice but about 20 times! Because all downloads went onto their desktop, the photo of their first grandchild was obscured. This had all taken lots of time because they had a dialup internet connection and each download had taken hours.

Double-clicking on the downloaded file would have installed it for them in one easy moment. If they had installed the first update then all this stress would have been avoided!

Online Security: Browser Safety

If you stop to think about for a minute you will realise that your browser is one of the main programs to access the internet. You should then realise that it is in your interests to keep your browser as safe as possible. The main browser that comes with Windows is Internet Explorer. If you use Windows XP you will probably still have IE 6, the version that came with Windows XP. This browser is known to be as leaky as a sieve: making it far too easy for many bad programs to attack your computer. If you have already downloaded, installed and run Secunia's SPI you will have been advised to update IE 6 to the latest version: IE 7. This version is less insecure, but an even better option is to download and install Firefox.

One of the major reasons that Firefox is a safer browser is because it is Open Source software. This means that everybody (and that includes you) can see just how well the program is written. It also means that problems can be fixed more easily. In contrast, programs from companies like Microsoft rely on the fact that nobody can see how well they are written, and they have no real incentive to fix any problems that are found. Microsoft can, and often has, denied that there are any problems with its programs.

One of the other good things about Firefox is the range of add-ons so that you can personalise the browser and make it truly yours. There are various themes to change the overall look of your Firefox and various extensions to change its behaviour. These range from ad- and script-blockers to YouTube downloaders, with various others in between. Mix and Match to your heart's content, and if not satisfied there will be another 5,000 others for you to try!

Firefox is not the only browser on the block. Other contenders (in alphabetical order) are:

- Chrome
- Opera
- Safari

These browsers are all free. Chrome is open source (like Firefox) while Opera and Safari are closed source (like Microsoft). Download and try them all: you may be pleasantly surprised by how good some of the others are!

Websites

Firefox	www.mozilla.com
Chrome	www.google.com/chrome
Opera	www.opera.com
Safari	www.apple.com/safari