

Radio Days – 2009-03-21

Tip of the Week – Who Do You Believe?

One of the themes which comes up frequently in my conversations with my clients is the help which many well-meaning people give. Usually this help turns out to be bad, and it will often damage your computer. This problem is bad enough when the person giving the help is an adult, but the problem is compounded when the person is a child.

If a well-meaning friend tells you how to handle a problem, just ask them to show you on their computer, not yours. Many problems will be resolved by this simple step because the person giving the advice cannot demonstrate the solution on their computer. If they stick to their computer they cannot do any damage to your computer. This one step will save many of the people who ring me from much grief.

Online Security: How You Can Get Infected

Because the internet is evolving so quickly, and there are so many sites which allow users to add content (sites like *FaceBook* and *MySpace*) there is a need for a new way to detect sites which are able to infect your computer without your knowledge. If you have recently installed AVG anti-virus and its toolbar, you will notice that next to each search result in both Firefox and Internet Explorer there is a mark to let you know just how safe each result is.

There are several companies which provide this information. The first that I discovered is called Exploit Prevention Labs. AVG recently bought this company and its technology is now part of AVG anti-virus. The Exploit Prevention Labs website is a mine of information, and I suggest that you visit it if you have any interest in knowing just how your computer can be infected in 30 seconds. The videos on that site are interesting, and will help you understand what goes on behind the scenes. This sort of learning is much better than anything that I can do over the radio.

There are, of course, other companies with competing technologies. See the website list for some of these, and enjoy the trip through the underbelly of the internet.

You might also be interested to do a search for *heuristic analysis* and *zero-day exploit* (or *zero-day attack*). These are two related topics, and will become more common in a few months. This is because of the rise in what is called *Web 2*. Web 2 covers interactive sites like FaceBook and MySpace: sites where people can upload content to a website. This ability to upload is a two-edged sword: you can upload good stuff and the black hats can upload bad stuff. Please check out the video of the hack of Alicia Keys' MySpace account on the Exploit Prevention Labs website.

Heuristic detection of malware is now beginning to find its way into production anti-virus products such as BitDefender. This program is one of the latest to use heuristic testing of downloads to give your computer greater protection in the online world.

Websites

Exploit Prevention Labs	www.explabs.com
Haute Secure	hautesecure.com
AV-Comparatives	www.av-comparatives.org
Virus Bulletin	www.virusbtn.com
BitDefender	www.bitdefender.com.au