

Radio Days – 2010-03-20

Tip of the Week – Internet Not Working

I had two calls this week about the internet suddenly not working. Both callers described the experience of a working internet connection suddenly not working: no emails, no web pages, nothing. This was frustrating because they were both running businesses and both of them needed both email and internet access. It turned out that both problems had the same cause: their security software had an inbuilt firewall and the firewall settings were such that nothing could get through.

A firewall is a good way to stop intruders, and I strongly suggest that you have one, but it still must allow all wanted internet traffic into, and out of, your computer. The way to solve the problem of no internet traffic is often suggested by internet tech support people: close down your firewall. If closing down your firewall solves the problem then the problem is with the firewall. This is self-evident, but the solution can be more complex than this.

Having discovered that the problem was in the firewall, the solution must lie in the way that the firewall was configured. To get things working again I first had to start the internet security program. By checking the firewall settings, in each case I was able to change the firewall to make it use a less-restrictive setting to get the internet working again.

Sharing Photos Over The Internet

One of the most common activities on the internet is sharing photos. This is commonly done in one of two ways: sending the photos in an email or uploading them to the web so that people can see them there. Many people use social networking sites to display their photos to the world. This works well for people who only to want to share photos with their online friends who live on the same social networking site.

The problems appear when the person with whom you want to share the photos has no idea of how to create an account on your social networking site, how to log in to their account on your networking site then accept your offer of friendship so that they can view your photos. Phew! That was a mouthful. And, for far too many people, the strain of going through those steps is enough to create the same sense of panic that reading about it does.

The solution is both simple and free: use Picasa to share your photos. Picasa is a free program from Google which helps you organise your photos. It can also make simple adjustments (like removing red eye from flash photos) and it can keep track of all the people in your photos.

Picasa also allows you to share your photos with your friends. You just create a folder full of photos on your computer, save them to the Picasa web site then email the address of your photos to your friends. They, in turn, just click on the link in your email and your photos are there in all their glory. This is the easy way for you to share your photos with friends and make it easy for them.

The drawback is that the photos will not be full size as Picasa reduces all photos to postcard size. A better solution for sending full-size photos is Dropbox. Using this website means that the photos stay just as you upload them, but the person who receives them must download and install a free program from the Dropbox web site. This is fine if the person is computer literate enough to do this easily. Please think of your friends before you decide which method to use: you may have to use both methods!

Websites

Picasa <http://picasa.google.com.au>
Dropbox <http://www.dropbox.com>