Radio Days – 2010-04-17

Tip of the Week – Scams Ahoy!

As a continuation of last week's Tip of the Week I am passing on some information from the Queensland Police. This scam has people ringing you, stating that they are from Microsoft and informing you that you have a virus. You will then be asked to download a program which purports to be an anti-virus but is, instead, a program designed to provide information which is useful to the caller.

This scam is a way in which *social engineering* is used to defraud people. Social engineering is using people's desire to help others as a weapon to disarm them. The caller will typically tell the victim that the virus on their computer will infect other computers and that they must download and install the anti-virus program immediately so that they reduce the risk to other people. If you get a call like this please ask the caller for their name and number and report it to Crime Stoppers on 1800 333 000.

Please also remember to ensure that you have a good anti-virus program which you download yourself. Any anti-virus program which somebody else tells you to download is likely to cause far more problems than it will solve, and may cause you to lose important data.

Problems Emailing Files

One of my favourite horror stories is being called in to a client's office on a Monday morning because the internet was not working. It turned out that, on the previous Friday, he had emailed about 65 copies of a large Microsoft Publisher file to important clients. This file was some 60 MB in size because of all the photos, so was being rejected by each recipient's ISP. This meant that his internet connection was being swamped by emails coming and going. As each email was sent it was being rejected by the recipient and returned to the sender.

This, of course, is an extreme example both for the size of the file and for the fact that many people will not be able to read your email attachment because they do not have Publisher. This makes it vital that you send your email attachments in a format that people can read. The most common formats are JPEG and PDF. These are both excellent formats because people can download free readers for both, if they do not have them already.

A better solution, in this case, would be to upload the file to one of the files sharing sites then email your client or friend with the details needed to download your large files. This is much quicker than sending a large email to each person because you only have to upload the file once, not once for each recipient.

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