Radio Days – 2012-01-28

Tip of the Week – Email Problems

I had a call from a client this week. I was told that her computer did not have Windows and that it could not work. This, according to my experience, could not be true but I waited until I had arrived before assuming that my client was wrong.

She was wrong! Can you, or anyone you know, really imagine Microsoft letting a computer be sold without a copy of Windows?

Windows was working perfectly. Her email program, on the other hand, was not. She could neither send nor receive emails. Her husband told me to install another email program and was abusive when I left the existing one in place. Because I could not find the settings for her ISP I had to ring them to get the settings. Even after changing the settings I could not get the email program to work.

The next step was to create new account using the same email address and password. Once this was done I could send a new email and receive all her old emails. I don't know what was wrong with the old email settings: sometimes it is easier not to fight an intractable program!

Protecting Your Wireless Network

Some weeks ago I came across a client who had a wireless modem which appeared to be losing data. The reason that he assumed that his wireless modem was losing data was because he was being charged for data that he had not used: data which had been accessed through his modem while he had been away.

What is Wireless?

There are two meanings to the word *wireless* and these two meanings cause much anguish and grief to many of my clients. The first meaning is when you access the internet using a USB modem which connects your computer directly to the internet using the mobile telephone network. This is not the meaning that I am talking about here.

The meaning of the word *wireless* that I am using here is when your internet connection, be it ADSL, satellite or mobile phone, is distributed within your home or office using a wireless modem or router. This modem or router can be connected by wire to one or more computers and/or wirelessly to some other computers.

The problem occurs when your wireless connection is being used by another person without your permission.

What Can You Do?

There were some simple checks that you could perform to see if this was happening.

The first step involves finding out if any data is being downloaded by your computer. The program which I use to check this is called *NetWorx*. It is a free program which you can download and install to see just how much data is coming down your wires. If NetWorx shows that there is no data coming down your wires, but you can see the lights on your modem flickering, then you have a leech using your wireless network and running up bills on your account.

Apart from be a pain in the hip-pocket, this also leaves you open to charges from the police for illegal use of the internet. This illegal use is not yours, of course, but trying to prove that in a court of law would be very difficult.

It will be much easier just to choke the person who is using your internet account. Or, rather, to choke the computer which is using your internet account. This is much easier to achieve than you could realise.

All you do is set the security on your modem. This is easiest to achieve if you have a computer which has a direct wired connection to your modem. You will need to find the address of your modem.
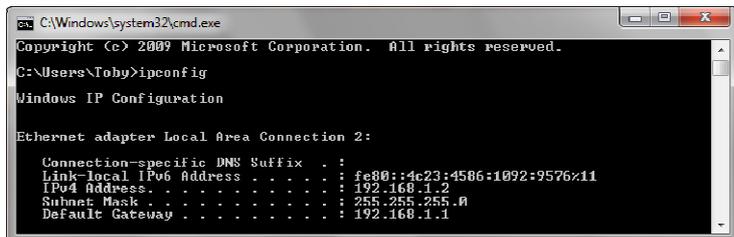
To find this address you need to run the command prompt shown here. In Windows XP click on *Start » Run*, type *cmd* in the box which appears then press *Enter*.

In Windows 7 click on the *Start* button then type *cmd* and press enter.

You will now see a black box with white writing. Type *ipconfig* and press *Enter*. Exactly what you see depends on your computer, but the first few lines of the screen on my computer are shown in this image. The line that you want is labelled *Default Gateway*: the details that you want are the numbers shown on that line. In my case these numbers are ***192.168.1.1*** and, while they may not mean much to you they are the address o your wireless modem.

Now start your web browser. For many people this will be Internet Explorer: the program with the big blue ***E***. If you have taken my advice from 1 January 2012 you will have installed a better browser. In either case please start your browser then type the number that you noted above into the address bar, like this:
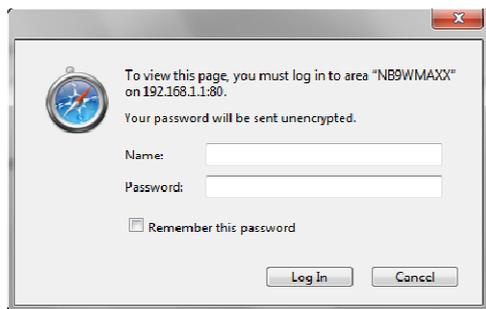
This is asking you to log onto your modem. If you do not know your *Name* and *Password* you will have to check with the documentation which came with your modem.

Type these two fields then press *Enter*. The page that you see now will depend on your modem so I cannot give you any advice apart from *read the manual*!

Your *Name* and *Password* may be *admin* and *admin* as these are common values in this context. Many people advise you to change these so that nobody else can log into your modem, but I have not done so.

Why Bother with All This?

There are the usual two reasons:

- It could save you money
- It could stop you from being harassed by the police

There are many people who make a habit of using other peoples' internet connections just because they are there! You have been warned!

Further Information

NetWorx   www.softperfect.com