

Radio Days – 2014-06-14

Tip of the Week – Read-Only MYOB Files

During the week I had a call from a client who uses MYOB to do her bookkeeping. As MYOB does every so often it asked her to verify her data file to allow her to continue to use the file for the next year or two.

This, in theory at least, is easy, like so many other things that you come across in your daily computing. In theory you just click on a link which then verifies your data file and displays a message stating that your file has been verified and that you can continue to use it without let or hindrance for the next year or so.

If only it were always so easy!

The Other Option

There is another option (isn't there always another option?) and that is to make your file read-only. A read-only file is very useful if you can guarantee that you will never want to make any changes to any of the data in that file at any time in the future. An example of a file like this is the file created after you have completed either the end of financial year roll-over or after you have completed the end of payroll year roll-over.

In both of these cases it is important that you do not make any changes to these files as they are now (after the roll-over) historical files which you need in case the ATO wants to see your company's financial data for an earlier period. This means that, as you have completed the relevant year (either payroll or financial), you will not want to make changes to that year.

What Happened

My client was told that to continue using her file she had to verify her file. She clicked on all the links provided by MYOB but she was informed by the program that the program was unable to verify her data file at that time and to try again later.

Later came and the same result followed the same series of clicks so, in utter desperation, she clicked on the only other option: make her file read-only. This, of course, meant that she could see transactions in her file but not create, change or delete any of them. Try as she might she could not get her file to accept the new transactions which she needed to enter.

The Solution

The only solution to her problem was the obvious one: ring tech support and wait on the line for an hour (it is near the end of the financial year, after all, and everybody has a question at this time) then get transferred to another person (with another wait) so that this more-senior person could guide her through the steps, and provide her with the magic number which would unlock her data file.

All in all, a most frustrating process.

Another MYOB Gotcha

MYOB has another gotcha: you can only create one file using your new MYOB program. If you want a second (or third or fourth) data file you must pay for it. With QuickBooks you can have as many data files as you want: this company does not charge you to use your new program to its fullest.

Removing Stubborn Viruses

During the last two or three weeks I have had a number of callers with the same problem: every time that they go onto the internet all sorts of advertisements pop up and hide their wanted screen. This is, as you can imagine, utterly frustrating and is the result of some sort of virus.

The obvious solution to this problem is not to get a virus in the first place, but this is about as realistic as saying that the solution to car accidents is not to have one. When you do get a virus infection it is devastating, and you often wish that you could do something about it yourself rather than waiting for a technician to solve the problem.

In this discussion I am assuming that you have done an update and a full scan with your anti-virus program. If not, please do one now. If you cannot update your anti-virus program or do an anti-virus scan then you need to continue with the next step.

If your anti-virus scan shows that there are no viruses on your computer then your next step is to download and install MalwareBytes. This program is one of the best complements for your anti-virus program. If you are unable to download, install and update MalwareBytes then you do have a problem which I cannot solve in this article so, if you are sure that you have a virus it is time for the next step.

MSE

One thing that all these callers have in common is that they are using the Microsoft Security Essentials anti-virus program. This program used to be an excellent way to keep viruses out of your computer, but recently it seems to have lost its ability. Either that, or the virus writers have learnt how get around its defences.

It is for this reason that I have changed my recommended free anti-virus program to Avast. This is a free program but it does require annual registration rather than annual renewal. If you want a better solution to your virus woes then may I suggest that you check out Avast Internet Security (commercial anti-virus program) or Kaspersky (which has no free version).

Both of these products have trial versions so that you can see how well they work on your computer. Please remember that you should only have one anti-virus program on your computer at any one time. If you want to install another anti-virus program please download and install the new anti-virus program while the old one is still working so that you do have protection at all times then, so that your computer does not slow down too much, uninstall the old anti-virus program once your new anti-virus program has updated itself and run a first scan. This way you will have at least some protection at all times.

Boot-Time Scan

This means a boot-time scan using a special version of an anti-virus program. Unfortunately, because your computer is infected with a virus, you will probably not be able to download any anti-virus updates.

This means that you will need access to another, uninfected, computer. Using an uninfected computer will ensure that your virus doesn't have a chance to do any damage to anything that you download.

For all this to work your uninfected computer will need a good CD burning program: my favourite free burning program is Ashampoo Burning Studio Free. If your uninfected computer does not have a burning program please download this free program because you will need to create a CD with your virus rescue disc.

If you are using Ashampoo Burning Studio you would select, from the menu on the left of the window, ***Create/Burn Disc Images » Burn Disc from a Disc Image.***

ISO Files

When you download a virus rescue disc you download an “image” of the disc. This “image” is what the disc contains, so you will need to burn your CD using a program which can burn CD images. Virus rescue discs range in size from about 50 MB to about 200 MB so can take some time to download, depending on the speed of your internet connection. This starts the process of creating a CD with your virus rescue disc.

When you download a virus rescue disc it will be in iso format. This file format is designed so that you can create CDs or DVDs with any good burning program.

Download A Virus Rescue Disc

The next step is to download a rescue disc for your computer. Please remember to do this using a clean computer as you do not want your rescue disc to be infected with a virus. While you are doing this it will be worth downloading more than one. Many of you will know that I always advise people not to have more than one anti-virus program on your computer at a time, but this virus rescue program is not a normal anti-virus program.

Normal anti-virus programs fight each other when you have them on your computer at the same time. The anti-virus program that you are about to download is an iso file which needs to be burnt to a CD so that it can work so this restriction does not apply because you are only running one program at a time.

The reason for downloading a number of rescue disc iso files is that, especially if this is a new virus, the anti-virus program writers may not have had time to create a program which can remove your particular virus.

The first step is to find a virus rescue program. My favourite place to start is to use google to search for *virus rescue disc*. This search turns up many references to anti-virus rescue discs, and most of them are from reputable companies. Please download at least one of these, preferably more than one. Save them in a place where you can find them again because you will need to burn each one of them to a separate CD.

When you have downloaded one rescue disc iso, and while the others are still downloading, you can start burning the first iso file to a CD. This is a simple matter if you use Ashampoo Burning Studio. Please make sure that you verify the CD after you have burnt it.

Cleaning Your Computer

Now is the time to actually check your computer for viruses. Not all strange behaviour is caused by a virus, but you still need to check for them.

Start your computer and ensure that it boots from your new CD, not from your hard disc. You may have to make changes to your computer to ensure that it boots from the CD rather than the hard disc, but the mechanics for that are beyond this article.

Booting this way will probably display lots of messages on your screen which you do not recognise. This is to be expected because you will probably be booting into an operating system called Linux. Linux is free and much better for these sorts of operations.

Once your computer has booted you may need to start the program which checks for viruses, but it is far more likely that this program will start automatically and all that you have to do is watch the grass grow.

Because each program is different I can give you no specific instructions so you will have to fly, as I do, by the seat of your pants. This can be quite interesting so you may need to read the screen so that you know what to do next. For some people this will be a challenge, while for others this will be an interesting new experience.

Once each disc has completed its task you will then have to restart your computer to run the next rescue CD. Repeat this process for each of the rescue discs that you have created.

I hope that you manage to remove all the viruses on your computer and can now get back to your daily work using a clean computer to do so.

Further Information

MalwareBytes	www.malwarebytes.org
Avast	www.avast.com
Kaspersky	www.kaspersky.com
Ashampoo Burning Studio	www.ashampoo.com