











Training Service Website Design

Viruses


What are they and how do I protect my computer from them?

What is a Virus?


Computer viruses are small software programs that are designed to spread from one computer to another and to interfere with computer operation. Spyware and Adware are, in essence, viruses or unwanted software programs. A virus might corrupt or delete data on your computer, use your e-mail program to spread itself to other computers, or even erase everything on your hard disk.

-  Viruses are most easily spread by attachments in e-mail messages or instant messaging messages. That is why it is essential that you never open e-mail attachments unless you know who it's from and you are expecting it. Always avoid opening attachments that end in .exe, .vbs, .bat, .pif, .com and .scr since these are the file types that are most commonly used to spread viruses and worms.
-  Viruses can be disguised as attachments of funny images, greeting cards, or audio and video files.
-  Viruses also spread through downloads on the Internet. They can be hidden in illicit software or other files or programs you might download.
-  Browsing the Internet sometimes calls for small programs to be downloaded to your computer and they run there to help make the whole thing you are looking at go quicker or easier. Some of these however, have been put there to drop a little "extra" program onto your system, which will then deliberately mess things up.
-  You can sometimes have a virus that hasn't yet hurt anything, but is waiting for a moment or date in time when it will be activated.
-  The best way to insure that you don't have a virus is to buy virus scan software, have it on your system, and have it scanning your system periodically.
-  This virus scan software can delete viruses automatically, and prevent new ones from getting onto your system.
-  Almost all viruses come through emails. Be wary of email attachments that you are not expecting, even if you know the person who sent the email. Viruses and worm are often sent as a zipped file (such as .zip) to try to hide from virus scanning software. Some viruses are sent in what looks like an ordinary program, such as PowerPoint, when in fact they are dangerous viruses. **DON'T OPEN EMAILS FROM PEOPLE YOU DON'T KNOW.**



How many viruses are there?

-  New viruses, worms, and bugs are constantly being developed. The antivirus program looks for and downloads the definitions (fixes) to your computer. This is called a live update. Unfortunately, a fix is not developed until after the virus is spreading through the Internet. Norton, McAfee or other companies can't come up with a fix until it knows about the virus.

VIRUS ALERT

-  Unfortunately, many viruses are generated through holiday seasons. Their email subject line is something like 'Happy Holidays, Merry Christmas, Happy Easter, Happy Halloween, etc. If you receive an email with these subject lines and **YOU DO NOT** recognize the sender, **DO NOT** open them. Some of these viruses are so vicious that they can completely wipe out your computer. **DELETE** these emails immediately. Added precaution, close the preview pane in your email program.

How do I protect my computer?

-  You protect your computer by having an anti-virus program installed and the live-update function activated. Do not have multiple programs installed as they conflict with each other.
-  Many Internet Service Providers (Cox, Qwest, etc.) offer anti-virus programs as part of their service.





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What is an anti-virus program?

-  An anti-virus program identifies a virus and either repairs, quarantines, or deletes the infected file. The original purchase protects your computer for 1 year.
-  If a virus is detected, the anti-virus program identifies the problem and either repairs, quarantines, or deletes the infected file. The most common way to get a virus is through an email attachment. A good rule of thumb is to never open an email from an unknown source.





What is a subscription?

-  After the 1st year, you must renew your subscription so that you receive the latest virus and Internet security protection each time you access the Internet.
-  The anti-virus program automatically downloads the definitions (fixes) to your computer each and every time you go on the Internet. This only takes a few seconds. It downloads the latest fixes available. **Do not** stop this live update.

Installing and subscribing to an Anti Virus Program

-  Most new computers come with a free trial subscription to an anti-virus program. At the end of that trial period, you will get a warning that it is time to subscribe for a full year's service. **This one-year service is what provides you with the live update function.**
-  If you do not allow the program to run live updates, you have wasted your money and are not protecting your computer. It doesn't make much sense to spend hundreds of dollars on a computer and not be willing to spend about \$40-45 per year to protect that investment.
-  When you near the end of each year's subscription, you will be prompted on screen during live update to renew your subscription. Follow the instructions on screen. Have your credit card handy.
-  If your computer does not currently have an anti-virus program installed, or you want a different program, you can purchase the program at Staples, Office Max, Best Buy, etc. We do not recommend downloading it from the Internet for two reasons. One is that the download doesn't always come through correctly, and two, you are downloading something to your computer without any protection.
-  **If you already have an anti-virus program installed and wish to install a newer edition or a different program, you must uninstall any currently installed anti-virus program. Go to Start, Programs, Locate your anti-virus program, Click on uninstall.**

Spyware

-  Spyware is a general term for a program that is designed to gather data about you and track where you go on the Internet, usually without your specific knowledge. One category of Spyware is called "Adware" which is used to push advertisements to your computer in the form of pop-up ads.
-  Of course, the fact that you see pop-up ads does not mean that you have Spyware on your computer. Many Web sites that you visit will load pop-up ads when you visit them. While these can be an annoyance, they are related to the specific sites that you visit.
-  However, if you find that pop-up ads are appearing even when you have not surfed to a Web site, you may have Spyware on your computer. Internet users often install Spyware on their own computer without realizing it. Many of the free programs that are available on the Internet include a Spyware component. The service agreement that you are asked to read before downloading and using the software may even mention the fact that the program will track your behavior or push advertisements. But, since most people do not read the service agreement, they install the software without realizing that it includes a Spyware component.
-  There are programs that protect your computer from Spyware. Some are free and others you would need to purchase. To find free programs, do a search for Adware Protection or Spyware Protection. Programs you can



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purchase include Windows Defender, McAfee and Norton by Symantec. Many Internet Service Providers offer Spyware protection as part of their service.