

“Practice Safe Computing”

Keep your computer running smooth and virus-free: BUCS Frequently Asked Questions

Note: all specific instructions are given based on Windows XP

How do I Practice “Safe” Computing?

A big danger on the Web is unintentionally inviting malicious software into your computer by clicking on ‘scams’. A firewall won’t prevent downloading something you’ve requested.

- DO NOT – download ‘smiley faces’ or other cute software that is offered for free. Nothing is totally free – most come with spyware attached.
- DO NOT – believe any email that tells you to give them your credit card numbers or passwords. This is called ‘Phishing’ - clever scams that make you believe your bank is asking for verification. Your bank will NEVER ask for your password over email. Microsoft will NEVER promise rewards for information. NEVER send private information in an email – period.
- Regardless of your best efforts, if you use your computer a lot and frequently use the Internet, your computer will probably need to be reformatted (clean it out and start over) by the time it’s 2 years old. And, by 4 years old, you need a new computer. Be Prepared.

I am using Internet Explorer for my Browser. I’ve heard that using Netscape or FireFox means less vulnerability to viruses. Should I switch?

- Since Internet Explorer is the most popular web browser available, it is the object of more attacks than other browsers, but the other browsers are not inherently any safer. They are still subject to attacks; it just doesn’t happen as often.

Use a firewall: If you practice BUCS as outlined here, the ‘one-way’ firewall that comes with Windows XP is sufficient. Only use one firewall.

Backup

How do I make a complete backup of my computer?

- To make a complete backup of your computer, including the operating system and all the software, you need special ‘Imaging’ software. This is impractical for home users.
- You can’t backup programs, you need the original CDs . They will contain the operating system and the software needed to set up your computer. You also need the original CDs of other software you have purchased. All these CDs will be needed if your computer crashes or needs to be reformatted at some time – keep them in a safe place. Take them with you on extended travels.
- Your job is to backup the stuff that you have created and stored on your computer. The accounting files, word processing documents, digital photos and email information. We recommend copying these files to a CD using a program such as Roxio Easy CD creator, or use My Computer – right click on the folder to copy and choose ‘Send To CD Drive’.
- To read more about making backups, go to <http://www.langa.com/backups/backups.htm>

Where are the files that I should backup

- That depends on you. You can organize your computer files into folders that you create. If you don’t create any folders of your own, many programs store the files you create in the ‘My Documents’ folder. This would be an important one to back up. Not all programs use ‘My Documents’. Quicken stores your accounting files in the folder where Quicken is installed.

How do I backup my email address books

- You need to know where your email address book is and what it is called. That file needs to be copied to your backup CD.
- In Microsoft Outlook, you can find that filename by right-clicking where it says ‘Outlook Today’ [Personal Folders], choose Properties, then Advanced and look at the file name. It will be something like C:\Documents and Settings\Chris\Local Settings\Application Data\Microsoft\Outlook\Outlook.pst

When would I use System Restore?

- When you’ve recently installed something that seems to have ‘broken’ something else. System Restore will take your computer back to the state it was in before your recent install.
- Start / All Programs / Accessories / System Tools / System Restore

Update

What are all the things that I need to keep updated?

- 1. Windows Operating System (Windows XP SP2) – 2. Virus Protection – 3. Spyware Protection – 4. Adware Protection – 5. Software Applications 6. Hardware drivers and firmware

How do I protect my computer from getting viruses?

- The only way to be 100% safe is to never connect to the Internet. However, you can protect yourself from 95% of them by regularly performing the following procedures:
- Make sure you have a Virus Protection program installed AND make sure to update the virus definitions regularly. Only use one Virus protection program, Norton, McAfee, or AVG are all good.
- Download your Windows Updates regularly. You must install all 'Critical Updates' as soon as they are available. From your browser, select Tools/Windows Updates and follow the instructions.

How do I update my Virus Definition Files

- That depends on your software. Norton Anti-Virus has a button called 'LiveUpdate' which downloads the latest.

Where can I read more about Virus Protection?

- www.SARC.com is a good place to find the latest virus information
- Watch videos at <http://www.microsoft.com/athome/security/videos/default.msp>
- <http://coachconnect.net/tipsjimchris.html>: Keep your computer clean and up to date. Lots of links to further info are included in this article.

How do I know if I need to update a hardware driver or firmware?

- Go to the website for your hardware manufacturer and search.

Cleanup

What should I delete?

- 1. Old emails 2. Old documents 3. Old programs, note: programs can't just be deleted, you need to 'uninstall' them.

Should I delete 'Cookies' and Temporary Internet files

- Some 'Cookies' are good. They store things like your username and password for Amazon.com. Sometimes cookies can clog your system and you need to start fresh. In your browser, Tools, Internet Options, Delete Cookies, Delete files. Be sure you have a record of all your usernames and passwords somewhere.

How do I delete temporary files that are clogging up my computer?

- My Computer / right-click on C / Properties / Disk Cleanup

Scan & Defrag

What do I use to scan my computer for problems?

- Scan for disk problems with the utility that comes with Windows. Open 'My Computer', right click on C drive and choose properties, then Tools, then Check Now.
- Scan for viruses with your virus-checking software, or "House Call". Simply browse to <http://housecall.trendmicro.com/> and click on the link to 'Scan Now'..
- Scan for spyware & adware with Spybot Search & Destroy and AdAware or Microsoft's anti-spyware.

What is spyware and how do I protect against it?

- Spyware and Adware are relatively new nuisances for web browsers. Mostly, they cause all those annoying popups, but they can be more damaging. The programs we recommend to deal with them are Spybot Search and Destroy, which can be freely downloaded from <http://www.safer-networking.org> and AdAware from <http://www.lavasoftusa.com>.
- Microsoft has recently released its anti-spyware software. **www.microsoft.com**

What is defrag and how often should I use it?

- Defrag is a disk-organizing utility that can be found at My Computer / right click on C / Properties / Tools. How often you need to run it depends on how much you use your computer. Once every month or two should be sufficient for most users.