



Eagle Eye on Technology

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When it comes to computers, there's little worse than getting a virus, spyware, or hacker to bring your high-tech world to a halt.



We've seen dozens of machines without any type of protection. To secure yourself, both from the casual '[script kiddy](#)' to the hard-core ID thief, you'll need to be fortified. Here are some tips to help assure your security. (Be sure to read the [last newsletter](#) to learn about security issues regarding your wireless connections.)

Ask us about securing your home computer! We can do a full virus, spyware and computer security check at your home or business. Contact us at [503-649-1821](tel:503-649-1821) or email at help@eagleeyecomputer.com

Basic security covers three essentials, Your [antivirus](#), your [firewall](#) and your [anti-spyware](#) programs. In this issue of Eye On Technology, we'll cover some of the options you have.

Being that we're all about saving you money, we'll only cover the free options you have. Commercial options are available, but tend to be about the same protection over time.

- **ANTIVIRUS**

Antivirus software is a program that searches your hard drive and floppy disks for any known or potential viruses. The antivirus program stays on while your computer is running, protecting you from virus attacks. It's much like wearing a self-contained full body suit like you'd see in one of those 'plague' based movies.

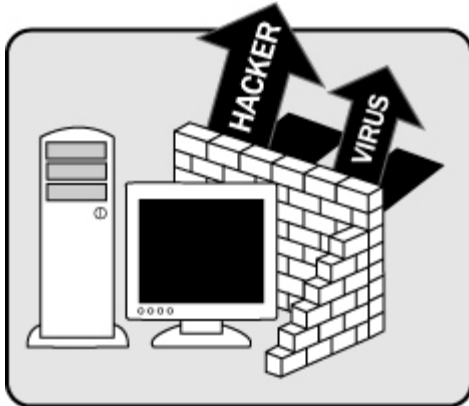
Antivirus program choices come down to Fords vs Chevys. It's a matter of personal taste. My taste of antivirus at this time says that Avast! 4 Home Edition is the idea free antivirus program.

You can download it here:



<http://www.avast.com/eng/download-avast-home.html>

- FIREWALL



A firewall is a [hardware](#) or [software](#) solution to enforce security policies. A firewall is equivalent to a door lock and permits only authorized users and can disallow unauthorized or potentially dangerous material from entering the system. It also logs attempted intrusions.

It's different from a virus protection program as it offers security. In an ideal world, one would never need to lock the front door. Unfortunately, there are many computer savvy 12-year-olds with too much time on their hands!

While an antivirus will protect you from getting the flu, a firewall will protect your house from being robbed.

Filseclab is the choice of firewall programs for us. Like most firewall program, it will need to be 'trained' in order to know what you want to allow in our out of your locked door. If installing such a program is too complicated, you're probably just fine with the Windows XP Firewall, which is built in to the operating system.

Filseclab Firewall can be downloaded here:



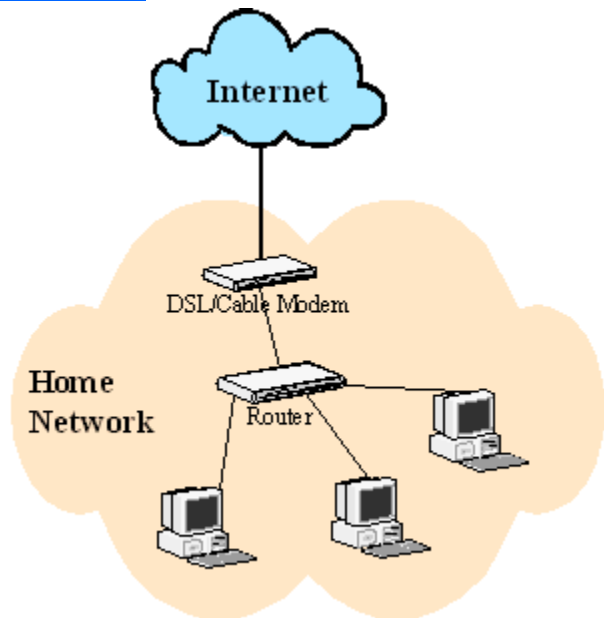
<http://www.filseclab.com/eng/products/firewall.htm>

A hardware solution to supplement your software firewall is an external device called a router. Most routers will provide a very nice solution to security concerns. Again, before installing your router, check the last issue of our newsletter for details on wireless and router security.

A good article on hardware versus software firewalls can be found here:



<http://www.smallbusinesscomputing.com/webmaster/article.php/3103431>



• SPYWARE PROTECTION

Spyware is any software that covertly gathers user information through the user's Internet connection without his or her knowledge, usually for advertising purposes. Spyware applications are typically bundled as a hidden component of freeware or shareware programs that can be downloaded from the Internet.

I'm not fond of 'active' spyware protection. Mostly because I want the program to do it's job, and not bother me unless it's urgent. So, I prefer the 'passive' versions that require you to manually run the spyware cleaning.

PS If you use [Mozilla Firefox](#) instead of Internet Explorer, you'll appreciate not needing to clean spyware as often.



A great 'passive' spyware cleaner (that you'll have to run manually) is:



http://www.lavasoft.com/products/ad-aware_se_personal.php

If you prefer full-time protections and aren't bothered by frequent software notifications, the 'active' spyware protection of choice is Ewido, found at:



<http://www.ewido.net/en/download/>

You can get a free security and virus scan at these sites:

- <http://onlinescan.avast.com/>
- <http://www3.ca.com/securityadvisor/virusinfo/scan.aspx>
- <http://www.bitdefender.com/scan8/ie.html>
- <http://www.pandasoftware.com/products/ActiveScan.htm>
- <http://housecall.trendmicro.com/>
- <http://security.symantec.com/>

• A NOTE ABOUT VIRUS HOAXES

Don't fall for the email announcement that says something like *"If you have file xxxx.xxx on your computer, you have a virus and should delete the file right away!"* An unsuspecting person would immediately delete the file, later to discover that the file they deleted was a necessary system file!

See these sites for more info on hoaxes and how to identify them:

<http://vil.mcafee.com/hoax.asp>

http://www.symantec.com/enterprise/security_response/threatexplorer/risks/hoaxes.jsp