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Tech Stuff

By Craig Vogel, Chief Technologist @ myComputerGuy, inc.

Welcome back to “tech stuff”. I hope you found last month’s “how to” items helpful and news items informative. This month we’re going to talk about security. I know; security seems to be all anyone talks about these days when it comes to tech. However, it’s such a critical topic, and people still aren’t vigilant enough about it, that I think its critical to keep educating everyone about it.

Backups

No excuses anymore when it comes to this. Back in the days of zip drives and CDs, I can understand if you didn’t have a simple backup plan in place. However today, with online backup services and built-in backup software, there’s no reason not to have a copy of your critical files somewhere. Besides, don’t you want to be able to relax anyway? If your stuff is backed up, you don’t have to worry about system failure, hard drive crashes, malware attacks or even deleting something by mistake – simply restore a copy from your backup and be on your way. Isn’t that a nicer way to live?

Online backup recommendation: Mozy with 2x protect (cloud/local – Windows/Mac).
Local backup recommendation: Time Machine (local, Mac only)

Viruses/Malware

Please, please, please! Do not open that unexpected attachment from a shipping service. Do not click on that link in an email from someone you know. Do not allow that automatically checked additional software to be installed along with a valid update. Do not click on that fake warning that your computer has a virus. These are all ways to infect your system and cause it to malfunction. Take your time, take a breath and read slowly and carefully what the computer is communicating to you. If you’re not sure what to do then don’t click on anything and just close the message. To remove the threats that do get through, run a malware scan at least once a month and remove whatever it finds. And please update your software, particularly the updates from Microsoft. A computer running outdated software is more likely to get infected.

Recommendations: Malwarebytes’ Antimalware

Passwords

Time to get serious with this too. No more using the same password on every site. No more dictionary words, your birthday, anniversary or child/pet's name. Time to make STRONG passwords that are different for each account. The best way to do this is to use a password generator as part of a password management program. A password manager helps you create and store passwords securely and only require you to remember one complex password.

Recommendations: Roboform, 1Password, Dashlane

I hope you found this information valuable. Next time we'll have a conversation about email and downtime. Please email me at craig@mycomputerguy-inc.com if you have something specific you would like me to address. To be continued...

Craig Vogel is President and Chief Technologist of myComputerGuy, inc., a small business and consumer IT consulting firm based in Irvington. Since 2002, Craig and myComputerGuy have been making IT simple, providing 25 years of experience and expertise to clients in the river towns, Westchester and Manhattan.