

Internet Security

Viruses, spyware, adware, worms, Trojans, hackers, with all the dangers of exploring the World Wide Web you may wonder whether it's worth connecting to the internet at all! Of course it is but it would be foolish to do so without taking some type of precautions to keep yourself safe.

If you have a reasonably up to date computer and an internet connection the easiest course is to buy a full internet security package and install it onto your PC or laptop. Norton Internet Security and McAfee Internet security suite are probably the most common products: they each cost up to £50 for a 12 month subscription and effectively look after you without the need for you to get too involved in the mechanics. They will use your internet access to automatically keep themselves up to date with the latest threats and provide you with comprehensive cover. At the end of the 12 months you will need to pay another 12 month subscription. If you don't you will stop getting updates; your security software will still work but may not effectively recognise the latest threats. So for peace of mind it is best to keep your subscription up to date.

The software will prompt you to renew on line but I always shop around to get it cheaper. You can often get a full new current copy from the likes of PC World or Comet for a lot less than renewing your older copy that has just expired. If you are replacing with the same make, as you install the process will remove the old version for you. If you pick another make you will need to remove the older version first.

If you have an older computer or your internet access is dial up rather than broadband a full internet security suite is not for you. Your computer may struggle to cope with the demands of the software and it will take a lot of your time connected to the internet to keep these programmes up to date. A better option is to go for a program such as AVG free. The software is less demanding of your processor and the downloads to keep it up to date are smaller; it also has the advantage of being free!

There is a bit of a 'catch 22' here, to get AVG Free you need to download it from the internet, but it's a big program and you wouldn't be able to do that easily with a dial-up internet connection. The best bet would be to get a friend to download it onto a memory stick for you using their broadband connection or to do it yourself at your local library.

For more background information have a look at the safety website www.getsafeonline.org.uk