

Brian Gongol's Security Update

Weekly Checklist for May 20, 2006

See www.gongol.com for updates throughout the week

Urgent This Week:

-  If anyone under the age of 25 is ever allowed near your computer, it is absolutely imperative that you lock the administrative account on your computer with password protection and that you use a “limited” account for all regular browsing. Young people are very heavy users of websites like MySpace (see <http://www.myspace.com/briangongol> for an example), which are perfectly fine for social networking, but which are also outstanding gateways to non-secure computer behavior. For instance, many MySpace pages include video, audio, and graphic links that come from elsewhere on the Internet. It is nearly impossible to ensure that all of those files are safe for your computer, since even regular old .gif files (the kind used on many web pages) have caused security problems (see <http://secunia.com/advisories/15103/> for an example).

Running limited-access accounts on Windows computers can go a long way towards reducing the risk of trouble, since limited-access accounts aren't empowered to install most programs. See <http://www.gongol.com/howto/createalternateadmin/> for instructions on setting up a limited-access account.

Important to Do Every Week:

-  Run a backup of your important computer files and store it in a safe location.
 -  Update your anti-spyware software and run it. If you need free anti-spyware software, visit <http://www.safer-networking.org/en/spybotsd/> and download Spybot Search and Destroy.
 -  Update your anti-virus software and run it. If you need free anti-virus software, visit <http://free.grisoft.com> and download AVG Anti-Virus.
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Other Recommended Security Measures:

-  Set up a limited-access user account on your computer and use it for most purposes. See <http://www.gongol.com/howto/createalternateadmin/> for complete instructions.
 -  Use Firefox, Opera, Safari, or another web browser. See <http://www.gongol.com/howto/getanewbrowser/> for complete instructions.
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Other Helpful Links:

-  Listen to the WHO Radio Wise Guys Saturdays from 12:00 – 2:00 Central via streaming audio at <http://www.whoradio.com/> or on 1040 AM.
-  Get a professional website for under \$500 at <http://www.northernrepublic.com/>