

# Keeping Your Business Secure

“How do we protect our networks when we have employees and business critical data?”

BY GLEN BOWES

A close friend and associate, Verne Milot from Growth Associates ([www.growth-associates.com](http://www.growth-associates.com)) drew my attention to an email today purporting to be from Microsoft Outlook. The subject line reads “Outlook Setup Notification” and the message body reads:

“You have (1) message from Microsoft Outlook. Please re-configure your Microsoft Outlook again.”

The email then offers a link that one can click apparently to re-configure Microsoft Outlook. The link is cleverly disguised to look like it may just come from Microsoft.

Verne seemed to be one of the unlucky first to receive this email as a Google search for it brought up only one warning from the University of Waterloo and the link appeared to still be active. By the end of the day,

a few more warnings had appeared including one from the University of Saskatchewan (<http://www.usask.ca/campusafety/it-alerts.php>) that warns:

“Do NOT follow the link inside the email, it will take you to a fraudulent site where you will be coerced into giving up your login credentials or where you will become infected with a virus. Delete the email immediately.”

To be honest, I don’t know yet what this link does—I aim to find out—but being infected with a virus just by visiting it is a real possibility. Fortunately Verne wasn’t fooled by this crafty message and deleted it without opening the link. I’m willing to bet many others weren’t quite so lucky though.

And that brings up a good point in our discussion about business computing. How do we protect our networks when we have employees and business critical data?



Viruses, and all forms of malware, have become incredibly insidious and widespread lately. Web sites are being hijacked to spread them and email messages like the one above lures people into going to those sites. There are many other ways of getting this junk but the point is—it’s almost too easy. Add to that employees who may innocently find their way into trouble with this stuff and you have potential for business downtime—if you’re lucky.

So what do you do to prevent nasty surprises and downtime?

Keep your antivirus up to date—viruses are released in droves every day. It’s not enough to simply have

homework before choosing one.

Keep users under control—this is a tough one, many people hate to seem like an ogre but giving users full control over a network is a bad idea. In fact, most systems other than Windows recommend using a limited user account for your own day to day work. This is something best done with a server but enabling users to do their jobs but not bring down the fort is in the entire business’s best interest.

Put up a (fire)wall—Windows has a built-in firewall and many antivirus/security packages do too. A firewall helps protect a computer from intrusion and can block bad guys from taking advantage of some

## As the Bigger & Better Journey Continues... Changing Your Quality of Life

“...the successful application of what we learn is in a league of its own.”

BY MELANIE CRAWFORD

I love quotes. No, let me re-phrase that. I love applying the wisdom of quotes. My life insurance expert Greg Filer revealed something very thought provoking in a recent meeting. He said, “When I read something, I do it with the intent to write down at least one thing I’ve learned and how I will apply it.”



■ Melanie Crawford

What a concept—and a challenge. No doubt we all have the inherent ability to learn, but the successful application of what we learn is in a league of its own. In my line of work I have had the delight of witnessing unimaginable positive change in the lives of others. I must admit that it is not the mere acquisition of information that changes the quality of life, but rather the confidence, desire and ability to put the knowledge into action. Successful learning largely depends on the presenter’s ability to inspire and impart strategies of implementation combined, of course, with willingness of the learner. Carl Bard once said, “Though no

one can go back and make a brand new start, anyone can start from now and make a brand new ending.” What an eloquent and simple statement of truth. I would be willing to wager that a huge percentage of the population would agree with this quote and perhaps even feel inspired and motivated by it. The question remains, how will you apply it? ■

Melanie Crawford & her husband Warren own and operate Bigger & Better Journey Learning Centre with over 20 years of combined experience in educating & empowering others.

[www.biggerandbetterjourney.ca](http://www.biggerandbetterjourney.ca)

Bigger & Better  
Journey

“...you can do some incredible things to stay safe without breaking the bank, and then of course there are bank-breakers.”

antivirus, it has to be kept up to date so that it can catch new viruses. When your antivirus asks you if you want to install an update, do it!

Keep Windows up to date—you know that little yellow shield with an exclamation mark you see pop up in the bottom right of your screen, down near the clock? That’s usually an indication that Windows updates need to be installed and because many of the web site viruses use Windows vulnerabilities to infect you, Windows simply has to be kept up to date. When you see that shield and it says “updates are ready for your computer”, install them!

Install antispymware—many antivirus packages out there get a lot of the bad stuff but you still need antispymware as well. This may come with the antivirus package or may be something you install separately. Be careful though—there are many fake antispymware packages that are really spyware themselves, do your

vulnerability. It is always a good idea to keep your firewall active.

Stop ‘em before they get in—in addition to all of the stuff you’re going to do on individual computers, there are a number of great firewall/security devices that can block nastiness from getting in from the Internet before it even reaches a computer. A hint here—you can do some incredible things to stay safe without breaking the bank, and then of course there are bank-breakers. Either way, an ounce of prevention... ■

Glen Bowes is a Microsoft Small Business Specialist, MCSE, CCNA, A+, and Network+ certified professional. Glen can be reached at (905) 378-1215 or [glen@bowesit.com](mailto:glen@bowesit.com)

Disclaimer: This article is of general information only and it is recommended that you always talk to a professional before installing any hardware/software programs. The publishers assume no responsibility in the correct or incorrect use of this information.