

Re: Firewall and Home Network

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From: Robert R Kircher, Jr. (rrkircher@hotmail.com)

Date: 11/19/02

From: "Robert R Kircher, Jr." <rrkircher@hotmail.com>

Date: Tue, 19 Nov 2002 09:25:42 -0500

JGS wrote:

> *Mornin'*
>
> *Excuse the newbie question,*
>
> *I have three home pc's, each directly linked to a netgear*
> *router/modem.*
>
> *I currently have Freedom Firewall on one of them.*
>
> *Should I have a firewall on each of the PC's, of will I be protected*
> *as I am ?*
>
> *Thanks*
>
> *Jonathan*

Well here's my 2c worth...

First of all the posters that replied are correct. The real answer is maybe yes, maybe not...

The first thing you want to make sure is that you have good AND updated antivirus software on all your PCs. 9 times out of 10 I have to clean up after viruses over hacked PCs.

Your NAT router should do a pretty good job of keeping unwanted and unsolicited traffic out. The exception to this is if you have any port forwarding turned on. In this case you are vulnerable and that PC should have a firewall installed.

The other good reason for installing a desktop firewall is to manage OUTGOING traffic. Many Trojans call home to momma and if you have a FW installed and properly configured you can capture this traffic and then locate and remove the source.

The key is to evaluate the risk. IMO you are more at risk from viruses than

hacking. Adding a Desktop firewall behind your NAT router may be equivalent to putting on two rain coats. Ask yourself, How often has my installed firewall blocked a hackers attack?

The second key is properly configuring the FW if you choose to install it... I can't tell you how many people who I support have a FW installed but because they don't understand why they can't browse the web or get their email they either disable the FW or open it up wide for all the nasty traffic to get through...

IMHO Desktop FW's aren't every day consumer ready yet. I've tested most of the free and many of the pay FW's and I find them all difficult (for the everyday user) and time consuming to configure. This coming from someone who works with "corporate" firewalls. If you understand how internet traffic works you're ok but most of my home and home office clients have no clue. Anti Virus software, on the other hand, is pretty much install and forget. The most you have to configure is the auto update and most do that for you at install time...

With all that said, I'd look at a HW firewall solution between your router and you PC's. This assumes that you are using Netgears Modem Router. If you are DSL or Cable then look into the Netgear ProSafe routers. They have a very good FW built in which manages both incoming and outgoing traffic. Then you can get rid of the desktop FWs altogether.

HTH

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Rob