

Re: Zone Alarm (free addition) and Netscape dialup accelerator.

checks after booting.

I generally advise other home users to install a virus scanner.

These teenagers and their friends, would you say they are 'average' computer users, like what we have been discussing? Or are they perhaps a bit more knowledgeable than most?

They have no technical interest in computers and would not be able to correctly explain what's inside the box. They could also not be expected to understand popups like "Do you want najort.exe to connect?" or "Should this network be in the trusted zone?" This is one reason why I consider personal firewalls to be nonsense. They are however way ahead of me when it comes to arty looking Word or Power Point documents.

If they are more knowledgeable than most then it's only because they are aware of why it's a very bad idea to allow everyone to use an administrator account and to download and install anything they like whenever they like.

Both use

Internet Explorer. I know it will not be possible for you to believe this.

I can believe it, just wondering why, when there are other 'better' browsers available (some for free too).

You were the one complaining about it earlier.

I do try to get people to use an alternative browser when possible.

I use Firefox myself.

Unfortunately I have found that Firefox is sometimes incompatible with teenage home users for one reason or another so I decided that because their computers are easy to restore from an image and because I think it's very unlikely that the users will be affected by unpatched holes and because they have user not administrator accounts I decided to allow use of Internet Explorer on these particular PCs. I'm still waiting for Microsoft to finish fixing Internet Explorer though. It's only taken them what? 11 years? so far.

I believe that the best way to control malware is to configure your network/computers/procedures so that you never get it.

Tried to sneak that one in, eh? Procedures. So, the user does matter.

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The user shouldn't matter, but in the case of a home Windows PC at present it is advisable to have some knowledge of why it's a good idea to delete unexpected email from people you don't know and why it's a bad idea to accept or click on anything you're offered without thinking about what the motive of the site offering it might be. These things are Microsoft's problem not the user's problem. You can't expect users to have any technical knowledge at all. Most people won't do it if the computer explains the possible consequences of installing untrusted unknown software.

The best way to deal with it if you do get it at home is to spend a few minutes restoring a drive image.

Re-active instead of pro-active?

Well there's only been one incident so far which required it. About six months ago one of the users was convinced the computer had a virus, and not unreasonably because it was behaving very strangely. This turned out to be because the drive had failed and Windows was in serious trouble trying to find parts of itself. You can decide for yourself whether that's re-active or pro-active. How many times has your personal firewall bothered you with popups in the last 6 months?

In the meantime, how much spam has the zombie spewed?

None at all, although I'm sure it would have tried. I would rather the computer doesn't get any zombies, spam or otherwise, but even if it did, and if it was able to send spam outside, would it really matter very much if it only existed for a few hours before the drive was restored from an image?

Anyone who can correctly use a personal firewall can also do this but I don't see many people telling home users to make a backup image of their computer. The article I found on your favorite web site does contain advice on backing up to an external drive.

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Not my 'favorite', just an example of one 'respectable' source that advises using pf's.

Ok :) Obviously they must have technically aware users who know how to answer the personal firewall's popups. Either that or they forgot to consider use of the personal firewall in the real world.

Jason

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Religion is the most malevolent of all mind viruses.
Arthur C. Clarke

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