An informational newsletter from **RKS Business Services**

Viruses

The Internet – Useful But Dangerous

Today most businesses need to go online every day for E-mail, orders, vendor contacts, information searches and so much more. But every time you go on line, you take the chance of picking up a variety of threats — viruses, worms, spyware, spam, or hackers.

Viruses and worms can corrupt and destroy files. Spyware, and spam slow down the computer. Hackers can get into your computer and look around at your confidential information.

Some of these threats are merely an inconvenience, but many are quite serious and can cause havoc in your business data files. The financial cost to remove the virus and restore the system, along with the loss of staff time can be quite high.

Using protection software and hardware, you can put in place some strategies that will safeguard your computer(s) and still allow the internet to be a vital part of your business.

Internet Strategies

- Become an expert about Internet security. Resources are magazines, Microsoft and other web sites, your ISP (Internet Service Provider), and even other business owners or friends. Check more than one resource so you can form a balanced view of the subject.
- Choose virus protection software, preferably with spyware/adware protection.
- Use a hardware router.
- Set up a personal firewall in your virus protection software.
- Choose an ISP that has protections built-in.
- Design computer networks with a hardware firewall.
- Decide which employees are permitted to go on- line and build permissions into their computers.
- Create a written internet policy for your company.

Written Internet Policy Guidelines

- Make sure each computer in your office has a virus protection program on it.
- Set your virus protection program to automatically go online daily and obtain the latest virus and program enhancements. This service will need to be renewed periodically. Make sure you do that. Viruses are created daily.
- Set up the virus protection program to run at all times when you are on the Internet.
- Run virus scans regularly on each computer either on a regular schedule or automatically.
- Download all Microsoft Windows operating program updates (all versions). The updates often include security enhancements.
- Appoint someone in your office to be responsible for downloading updates and running the virus scan. Make it part of their job description.
- Decide what information you are willing to disclose to other companies via the internet, i.e. credit card numbers, employee names and addresses, etc. Not all sites are "secure". A secure web site begins with https, not http. There is a lock icon in the address.
- If you accept credit card payments, make sure you don't store the information on any computer in the office. The payment card industry has restrictions about this. Non compliance costs money.
- Incorporate the internet policy with your employee policies to insure the standards are met by everyone.
- Make good backups of all of your vital company information data files, including accounting, employee and customer information, product files, etc., on a regular basis.

Have any questions? Call us.
We would be happy to talk with you.

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