



The Technology Insider

Computer Tips, News, Tricks, Coupons, & Specials

216-571-2115

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Featured Article



Newsletter 8 has arrived! This month we have 2 different articles, plus, we went ahead and threw in an interesting statistic and we'll also start adding one handy program or website you may want to look into each month.

As always, we'd love to know what you want to hear about to help boost productivity, keep your data safe, keep your family safe, or any other computer related topic.

Identity Theft

As things get tougher more and more people invariably turn to crime. Many of us do our banking, check credit card statements, and do many other things online. The tech savvy criminals know this and take advantage; identify theft is becoming more and more common. We'll go over some common ways crooks can steal sensitive info and then go over some ways you can help avoid it.

There are several different ways a crook can steal your identity or obtain sensitive

Did you know? 59% of U.S. computers are infected with malware.

source: CNET, Malware worldwide grows
15% in Sept, 9/29/09.

Editor's pick of the month:

in the spirit of productivity,
here's a freebie you can use
to track ALL of your
shipments:

www.trackmyshipments.com

information. One way is to steal your mail right out of your postal mail box. While this is low tech, it is very effective as mail often contains credit card numbers, account numbers, social security numbers, etc.

Another way of obtaining confidential information is phishing. No, we're not talking about grabbing a rod and your tackle box; we're talking about crooks sending you phony emails which look legit asking for passwords, account numbers, and other personal information.

Malware is a recurring theme in these newsletters, it's for a good reason though as malware continually evolves, becoming more sophisticated and difficult to remove and/or detect. Some malware will run silently in the background logging keys you press as you enter passwords, sign in to various online accounts, or fill out web forms. This information is then sent back to hackers or crooks that either sell the information or use it for their own malicious purposes.

Steps to Help Prevent Identity Theft

Consider switching to online statements if possible. This could save you money in postage and is more environmentally friendly. If you're going to be out of town for more than one or two days, ask someone you trust to collect your mail.

NEVER send passwords, accounts numbers, or other sensitive information via email or a web form. If you are going to buy something online, make sure the page where you check out and enter your card number starts with https:// rather than just plain old http:// notice the difference. Also, check to see if the website has a SSL certificate (such as one from VeriSign; there are others also). These can usually be found on the website's home

page. NEVER respond to an email asking you for passwords, account numbers or other personal information. If in doubt, call the institution.

Keep your antivirus software up to date. As mentioned before, key loggers and other data stealing programs are designed to hide and run in the background unnoticed unlike other forms of Malware which are often more overt.

Consider changing your passwords for important security sensitive websites on a regular basis. Use strong passwords such as those that contain upper and lower case letters, numbers and special characters. If you are at home and are not concerned about anyone living with you obtaining the passwords you can write them down.

References: Debix February email newsletter.

Increase productivity without breaking the bank

To increase productivity at work or a small business, one does not always have to run out and buy the latest, greatest, fastest computer or upgrade their network. There are some simpler and cheaper options available that can help.

Consider buying a new keyboard and mouse. We're not talking about a plain old keyboard and mouse; we're talking about ergonomic devices with programmable buttons that can be used to launch commonly used apps or web pages. A comfortable employee or business owner is a happy one, and a happy one works harder. If you haven't already, upgrade to an optical mouse. The roller-ball mice get dirty. When this happens it interferes with the movement of the cursor on screen making it

erratic and aggravating. The older style mice can be cleaned to fix this, but why waste the time?

Use a KVM switch (keyboard, video, mouse). If you use a desktop and a laptop, don't clutter your desk with keyboards, mice, monitors, and docking stations; with a KVM switch you can easily share these devices between computers when needed.

Consider adding a second monitor. Not only does it look cool (I'll admit it), but it's a great set-up for typical office type computer work. Don't worry about the second monitor taking up more space on your desk; there are stands available that hold 2 monitors and align them precisely.


Who among us does not have at least 500 different business cards from friends, clients, service providers, and other business contacts? Why not consolidate all that contact information into one convenient file? For this, a card scanner can be obtained.

We've Been Around For A While Now...

Some of you may remember hearing about Custom Computer Solutions. We have served hundreds of residential and business customers in the Cleveland/Akron area (and everything in between), we have great prices AND great service coupled with technical know-how. On top of all of that *we are a Better Business Bureau accredited business*, so you know we're fanatical about customer satisfaction.

[See our website for more info!](#)

If your computer is running slow, go to our website and check out our PC Tune-Up. It is a 12 step, extremely thorough package that will



get your computer running like it did when it was new--all at a low, flat price.

Sincerely,

Brian Jenkins
Custom Computer Solutions, LLC

