

Don't Be Insecure About Your Computer

How to keep your computer safe

An onslaught of viruses and other security threats continues to damage countless computers on the UC Davis network. The campus continues its efforts to thwart viruses, worms, hackers, and spam; in fact, the latest edition of Norton AntiVirus software was recently made available as a free download to students via the MyUCDavis Web portal (see p. 4 for details). However, it is ultimately up to you to safeguard your computer against the latest wave of malicious attacks. We've outlined some of the most common ways in which your computer can be compromised and what you can do to prevent this from happening to you.

EMAIL ATTACHMENTS

What's the problem? Nearly all of us have been receiving hordes of virus-laden email attachments lately. Although the campus email servers automatically filter any known viruses from your email, that doesn't account for new viruses yet unknown by the filter. Email viruses are especially frustrating because they often (inadvertently) come from people you know. Some infected attachments could bring your whole system down by causing a hard-drive crash; others are designed to gnaw their way into flaws in your operating system, thus opening a port for hackers to invade your system and inflict serious damage.

How do I minimize the risks?

- Update your anti-virus software daily. It will prevent a majority of infected attachments from reaching your inbox.
- Keep your computer updated with current security patches, since infected email attachments may attempt to exploit vulnerabilities. Windows users can do this by visiting windowsupdate.microsoft.com or by going to the Control Panel and setting up automatic updates. Mac OSX users can use the "Software Update" tool in the System Preferences to manually or automatically schedule updates.
- Don't open attachments unless you are certain of the sender and the contents of the attachment.

WIRELESS

What's the problem? Wireless networks are sprouting up everywhere, including select areas on campus and nearly every coffee shop in Davis. But because wireless access points don't require a user to plug into a port, the networks are often more difficult to monitor and secure. If you're buying things online or logging on to Internet applications, it's a lot easier for someone to record your keystrokes and get a hold of your personal info, especially at some off-campus locations, where a username and password are not required.

How do I minimize the risks?

- Restrict your online shopping to wired connections or to encrypted Web browser sessions (indicated by a padlock icon in the bottom corner of the window). Don't open programs that contain personal information when on a wireless network. In fact, don't keep your Social Security number, driver's license number or bank account numbers anywhere on your computer, period.
- Use anti-virus software and be sure to update it frequently. You should also install the latest security patches on your operating system. Other computers sharing the wireless connection could be infected or compromised and may attempt to spread virus infections or hack into other computers.
- Disable file sharing so that others can't help themselves to files on your computer.
- Check out campus wireless resources at wireless.ucdavis.edu.

FILE SHARING

What's the problem? In addition to breaking copyright laws and putting yourself at risk for a lawsuit, swapping music, movies, and games over a peer-to-peer network opens the door to identity theft. This is because spyware—software that gathers personal information about you without your knowledge—allows hackers to access your personal files and programs. As if that's not enough to cause concern, you could be infecting your computer with shared files that contain viruses.

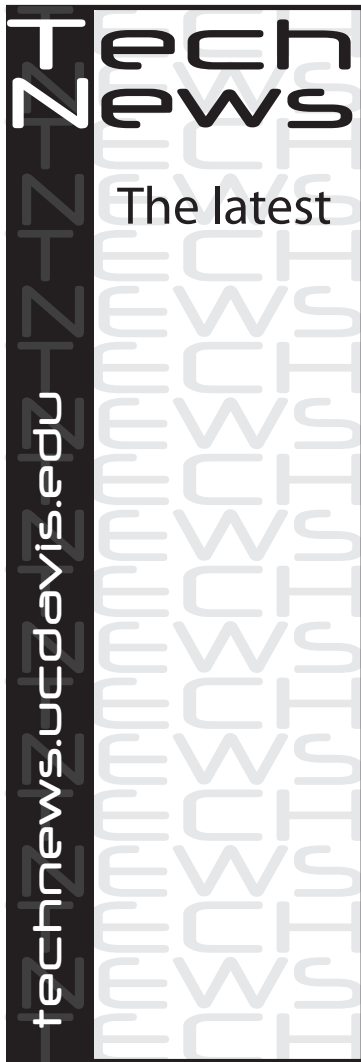
How do I minimize the risks?

- Use anti-virus software and be sure to update it frequently. Also keep your computer updated with current security patches.
- Use file sharing programs only from sources that you trust. Before downloading files, always scan them first with anti-virus software. Be wary of executable (.exe) files since they install immediately on your computer.
- Keep yourself informed of copyright laws and policies. Check out the UC's copyright education Web site at



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The latest

Don't Throw it in the Dumpster

How to donate or recycle your old computer

By Suzanne Beck, Senior, History

Electronic waste is a big issue these days as thousands of computers become obsolete annually and consumers upgrade to slicker and speedier products. Because many computer monitors contain a cathode ray tube (CRT), which carries lead and other toxic substances that can pollute the environment, you shouldn't just toss your computer in the dumpster when you upgrade to something new. So what are your options?

Donate it

If you have a relatively new computer, consider donating it to charity. Find a neighbor, school, church or other organization in need. You can also donate your computer through a non-profit organization such as the National Cristina Foundation (NCF). Fill out a donation form online at www.cristina.org and the NCF will arrange for pickup or drop-off with a local charitable organization.

Trade it in

You can also trade in your computer and receive money towards an upgrade. At Hewlett-

Packard (www.hp.com/united-states/tradein/), you can trade in any computer product or brand and upgrade to Hewlett-Packard or Compaq products. They provide a free online quote and free shipping for your old computer.

Recycle it

If your computer is too archaic to be of use to others, try recycling it locally or with a computer company. The Yolo County Central Landfill northeast of Davis will recycle your CPU and keyboard for free. The landfill charges \$12-\$18 to recycle monitors, depending on the screen size (for directions and additional information, visit www.yolocounty.org/recycle/crt.htm). Companies like Dell and Hewlett-Packard also provide recycling services (Apple does not currently have a computer recycling program). For a small fee, such as \$5 with Dell, the company will come pick up your junk and cart it away. For prices and shipping information, visit www.dell.com/recycle/

or www.hp.com/hpinfo/globalcitizenship/environment/recycle/.

But first...clean up your hard drive

Before you let your computer leave the safety of your bedroom, protect your identity by removing all personal data from the hard drive. Free downloads are available for PCs that will overwrite the disk, such as PC Inspector e-maxx (www.pcinspector.de/emaxx/uk/welcome.htm) or Eraser (www.heidi.ie/eraser). For Mac OSXs, use the "Secure Empty Trash" command to permanently remove all traces of deleted files. Mac users may also use the more robust SuperScrubber software, which is available for \$30 at www.jiiva.com/superscrubber/.

Do your part to reduce electronic clutter in your life and protect the environment by handling your e-waste responsibly.

Tired of Delivering Pizzas?

Want to round out your resume with a job in a technology field? Watch for jobs like these on the UC Davis Job Board (jobs.ucdavis.edu) or follow up with the contact information below (not all positions are open at this time).

- ASUCD Creative Media: Design Web sites, develop software, create ads for ASUCD. Visit asucd.ucdavis.edu/jobs/.
- Computer Room Consultant: Help students who use the campus computer labs. Basic troubleshooting of hardware and software problems, maintain cleanliness of rooms, assist faculty. Other administrative jobs at the computer lab (that don't require tech skills) are also available to students. Visit clm.ucdavis.edu/jobs/.
- Computer Lab Hardware Support: Intermediate-to-advanced hardware and software troubleshooting, equipment installation and repair, test and debug new software. Opportunity for special projects. See clm.ucdavis.edu/jobs/.
- Educational Technology Partners: Assist faculty members learning how to use educational technology tools, such as PowerPoint and the MyUCDavis Web portal. Training provided. Visit etpartners.ucdavis.edu or call Chris Sarason (752-9545).

- IET Publications: Writing, Web design, or Web support. Produce newsletters, Web sites, ads, and brochures about campus technology services. No tech background required for writing position. Visit iet.ucdavis.edu/studentjobs/index.html.
- Mediaworks: Work with the campus center for educational technology and digital media services. You'll have opportunities to program and test online courses, or work as videographer for staff/faculty video projects. Contact iet.ucdavis.edu/studentjobs/jobs.cfm.
- Network Operations Center Tech Support: Assist with telephone help desk for campus data and voice systems. Good customer service skills and some computer skills required. Contact Steve Edington (754-7256).
- The California Aggie: Assist in design and layout. Proficiency with software, hardware, and an eye for aesthetics required. Contact personnel@californiaaggie.com.

This article first appeared in the weekly "Bits & Bytes" column in The California Aggie. "Bits & Bytes" provides tech tips and info about student tech culture. Look for these columns every Wednesday on the Science & Technology page or view past columns online at the Student Computing Guide (seg.ucdavis.edu).

An Identity Crisis No One Anticipates

You've probably seen those Citibank commercials with the voices of identity thieves dubbed over unsuspecting victims. And it's no wonder why more people have taken interest in shielding their good name: identity theft—which could damage personal and financial records—is on the rise. In fact, the Federal Trade Commission received over 200,000 identity theft complaints in 2003, up 33 percent from the previous year.

Identity theft occurs when someone uses your name, Social Security number, credit card number, or other identifying information without your permission, usually to open new accounts, request credit, or charge merchandise. It could take months, even years, to clear up your records. Victims may be refused loans, housing or cars, or even get arrested for crimes they didn't commit. Even if you've never opened a credit account, you could still be an unsuspecting victim, since someone could use your personal information to open a new account in your name. Below are some helpful tips that will help you effectively deal with this growing problem.



Safety First

To minimize the risk of identity theft:

- Make sure your student ID number isn't the same as your Social Security number. Since 2000, all incoming students have been assigned an ID number that is entirely separate from their SSN. If they are the same, visit the Registrar Office (12 Mrak Hall) to change it.
- Order a copy of your credit report from each of the three major credit bureaus (find out what these are at www.consumer.gov/idtheft/) and check for accuracy.
- Secure personal information in your home, especially if you have untrustworthy roommates or are having service work done.
- Don't keep personal identification on your computer or make online purchases unless the info is encrypted and the Web sites are secure (look for a padlock icon in the bottom corner of the page).
- Use a paper shredder for receipts, bank statements and other documents containing confidential info.
- Don't send personal identity info via email—it can easily be read or intercepted.
- Visit security.ucdavis.edu for more information.

If you're a victim of identity theft:

- Place a fraud alert on your credit reports by contacting the fraud departments of the three major credit bureaus. Review your credit report for accuracy and close any accounts that have been tampered with.
- File a report with the police in the community where the identity theft took place. You may need a copy of your report to validate your claims to creditors.
- File a complaint with the Federal Trade Commission at 1-877-IDTHEFT. Counselors will take your complaint and advise you on how to deal with the credit-related problems that could result.

Some info taken from "ID Theft: When Bad Things Happen to Your Good Name" at www.ftc.gov/bcp/conline/pubs/credit/idtheft/.

Having trouble getting your Internet connection to work?
Questions about your computing account?

IT Express
is your UC Davis computing help desk.

754-HELP

Call to speak with a consultant.
Drop-in at 182 Shields Library
Mon-Thur 8-7, Fri 8-6, Sat-Sun 1-4.
Email ithelp@ucdavis.edu or visit
itexpress.ucdavis.edu.

Handy Web Sites For Students

By Suzanne Beck, Senior, History
Jeff Lagasca, Senior, Psychology
Stephanie Polizzi, Sophomore, English & Italian

Below are a few Web sites our student team has visited while at UC Davis. This is only a short list, and sites are changing all the time, so your mileage may vary.

Money-savers

- **FatWallet** (www.fatwallet.com): Includes a huge coupon database so you can save money while shopping, and an online forum where you can search for tips to maximize your money.
- **Best Book Buys** (www.bestwebbuys.com/books/): This Web site compares textbook prices from a number of online bookstores, including *half.com*, *amazon.com*, and others.
- **Student Advantage** (www.studentadvantage.com): Here you can purchase a \$20 student advantage discount card, which provides one year's worth of discounts at Greyhound, Amtrak, Barnes & Noble, and many local stores.

Games

- **Shockwave** (www.shockwave.com): This site offers a wide collection of online games.
- **Yahoo! Games** (games.yahoo.com): Lots of community gaming.

Online Communities

- **Live Journal** (www.livejournal.com): keep a blog, read other people's blogs and interact!
- **Davis Coeds** (daviscoeds.com): Allows you to introduce yourself to other UC Davis students with similar interests.

School Stuff and Other Useful Sites

- **Oxford English Dictionary** (www.oed.com): We've all had to read ancient poems from centuries past, but we may be getting the wrong definitions to archaic words if we're consulting a modern dictionary (e.g., Merriam-Webster, etc). This dictionary imparts definitions of everyday words as they were used centuries ago.
- **Spark Notes** (www.sparknotes.com): This student-run online forum provides Cliff's Notes-style observations of literature, as well as message boards where stumped students can help each other analyze literature and poetry.
- **Community Housing Listing** (chl.ucdavis.edu): Need a place to live for the summer or fall? This ASUCD Web site hosts apartment, house, or roommate listings which can be browsed for free. You may also post your own listing for a fee.
- **Student Job Listing** (jobs.ucdavis.edu): Here students can browse campus job listings, and local off-campus employers (also accessible through the "UCD Resources" tab on MyUCDavis).

The appearance of these sites here does not constitute endorsement by Information and Educational Technology or the University of California.

Treat Your Computer to Norton AntiVirus and Other Spiffy Software!

By Stephanie Polizzi, Sophomore, English & Italian

One of the many perks of being an Aggie is the free or discounted software offered through both the Software section of MyUCDavis and the UC Davis Bookstore Computer Shop. Read on to find out how and where you can obtain discounted programs like Adobe Illustrator and free security software such as Norton AntiVirus.

The Software site: MyUCDavis's Latest Feature

The Software site at MyUCDavis offers a list of programs that students can either download for free or purchase at a discount through the UC Davis Bookstore Computer Shop. Simply log in at my.ucdavis.edu, click on the "UCD Resources" tab and select the "Software" option.

Free Bug Zappers!

The crown jewel of the collection is Norton AntiVirus, a program that not only protects your computer from known viruses but also can update its virus-detection information (using its "Live Update" tool) every time you connect to the Internet. The Live Update service is set to expire on September 30th, but the campus is working on renewing the licenses for the next academic year.

The Godzilla of Web Browsers

Did you know that the Software site features Mozilla, a Web browser that not only has a built-in pop-up ad blocker, but also introduces "tab browsing"? Tab browsing is a feature that organizes all of your open Internet windows into little tabs so you can always see the names of the Web sites you are viewing and can toggle between them easily. Mozilla also provides optimum viewing of MyUCDavis.

Even More Freebies...

Software at UC Davis offers a variety of programs for students of every major. If you're interested in building your own Web site, you'll be interested to know that the Software site features the limited version of UltraEdit, a text, HEX, HTML and programming editor. But if you'd rather create offline publications, you might be interested in OzTEX, a Mac program that is designed to aid students with writing essays and creating publications.

A Variety of Reasons to Work Your Student Discount

Other programs available at a discounted rate through the UC Davis Bookstore Computer Shop include the Microsoft Office Suite and Adobe products like Photoshop, Acrobat, InDesign, GoLive and Illustrator. Students can buy these Adobe products separately, or packaged all together in the Adobe Creative Suite for less than half the regular retail price. Also available is MAT-LAB and SAF, inexpensive statistical programs math majors might find useful.

So, before you download illegal or buggy software, check the Software section of MyUCDavis and the UC Davis Bookstore Computer Shop for a full listing of all of the programs that are available at great discounts or, even better, absolutely free!

Norton AntiVirus

FREE FOR UC DAVIS STUDENTS
PC AND MAC VERSIONS AVAILABLE
INCLUDES SUBSCRIPTION TO
LIVE UPDATE

**DOWNLOAD
IT FOR FREE**

my.ucdavis.edu/software

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www.universityofcalifornia.edu/copyright/.

INSTANT MESSAGING

What's the problem? Viruses can be very easily transmitted via instant messages containing files or links. IM programs, like all software, may also contain bugs and flaws that could damage your system. And because IMs are not encrypted, there is always the possibility that a third party is monitoring your messages.

What can I do about it?

- If you receive a suspicious link—especially from strangers—or see one in a buddy's profile, don't click on it. Chances are it's infected.
- Update IM software when the latest versions are released.
- Do not share identifying information, such as credit card or social security numbers, over IM.
- Reset your password often.
- If you're programming-savvy, try using an open-source IM program such as gaim or Fire, which tend to have fewer security flaws.

SHOPPING ONLINE

What's the problem? If the site you're shopping on isn't secure, your credit card or identity information could be obtained by identity thieves. Illegitimate businesses could also sell your personal information to other businesses or spammers.

What can I do about it?

- Look for the padlock icon in your browser's lower corner indicating the site is encrypted and that your personal information is protected as it moves between your browser and the site's Web server.
- Look at the URL of the site. In "https://" the 's' means SECURE data transmission.
- Read the site's privacy policy. Most legitimate businesses promise not to sell your personal info to other vendors. If you can't find the privacy policy consider this as a strong danger signal.
- Don't buy if they don't offer you a way to print a receipt.
- Consider how reputable the store is since you are trusting them to safeguard your name and credit card number.

Doing all these things will certainly lower your risk of an attack, but sometimes security mishaps are inevitable. Just in case your files are deleted, it is important to regularly back up important data to a CD or to MySpace (the file-sharing system on MyUCDavis), or to whatever file storage system works for you. You should report security incidents to abuse@ucdavis.edu. For more computer security information, visit security.ucdavis.edu. For computing help, call IT Express at 754-HELP

hypertext

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For more student computing information visit scg.ucdavis.edu.