



Bug-Bytes

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IS THIS THE BRAVE NEW WORLD?

COMPUTER SECURITY HAS ITS DOWNSIDE



You need to be proactive to protect yourself against a litany of computer threats. There was a time early in our lives when we could leave our doors unlocked and our keys in the ignition of our cars. Those days are long since gone. So it is with computing. You have to be responsible for protecting your computer and all of the data that it contains.

These days there are lots of bad guys in the world—bad guys who get their kicks out of playing games with other people's **unprotected** computers.

There are viruses, worms, and trojans that can render your computer inoperable, ad-ware that slows down your computer while displaying unwanted ads (pop-ups, banners, ad-server ads, flash ads, contextual ads, background sounds, and unauthorized cookies), and spyware that mines your data and sends the unauthorized information to spyware companies. On top of these threats are potential break-ins by unscrupulous hackers bent upon gaining access to your unprotected computer. They want to prove to themselves and others how clever they are as they sabotage computers around the globe.

A POUND OF PREVENTION IS WORTH A POUND OF CURE

A friend of mine rants “why should I have to protect myself? Why doesn't my ISP or someone else do that all for me?” It is a good question, although a

little naive, but one that does not have a completely satisfactory answer.

These are many reasons why such a utopia does exist. While progress is being made to outlaw some forms of spam and spyware, there are many too many different ISPs. ISPs can be one-man shoestring operations to far-flung giant corporations. I think it is reasonable to expect our ISPs to do more on our behalf, but reliable do-it-all technology at a reasonable cost is not here yet, but we are getting closer. Some ISPs (AOL, Charter) offer security suites or partial solutions with their service. Check to see what your ISP offers. In addition, partial solutions, such as limited pop-up blockers are available with Windows XP SP2, Google Toolbar, and Yahoo Toolbar.

THREAT RANKINGS

The threats to which computers are exposed ranks from being very critical to being a minor nuisance. The following are listed from critical at the top to a nuisance at the bottom.

- Viruses, worms, and trojans
- Hacking attempts (Firewall)
- Spyware
- Ad-ware



SECURITY SUITES

Security suites are available that offer anti-virus, firewall, pop-up, spyware detection and blocking, and spam

blocking. However some of the modules may be weak and not nearly as good as modules in other products. At least they are moving in the right direction and are getting better. See the following link for some reviews.

<http://www.firewallguide.com/suites.htm>



SPAM BLOCKING

Effectively controlling spam requires some astute decisions that only you can make, because the filtering may block or discard messages that you want to receive. Spam filtering may be set so that it is much too aggressive. You don't want to be in the position of having to keep telling people, “I didn't get your message” when they ask you for a response.

In my view, good spam software filters e-mail message according to black lists and white lists, and a set of rules defined by you. Black lists should contain known spammers that you want to avoid. White lists contain a list of your e-mail friends, such as those included in your address book or messages to which you reply. Good spam blockers minimize the amount of e-mail that you have to review in the so-called gray area. Thus, your spam goes from a storm to a faint trickle.

ANTI-VIRUS

Computer users are advised to protect themselves with an anti-virus product

that is automatically updated daily. The best software vendors update their software within three hours of an outbreak, and even that may be too late in some instances.

FIREWALLS

Computer users are also well advised to use a firewall. A firewall protects you from outside hacking attempts. Windows XP with Service Pack 2 (SP2) comes with a limited firewall. It's a good start.

A major problem with some firewalls is that they may display bewildering and frequent questions that require you to make decisions about whether or not to allow particular actions. For the

uninitiated, and even for many experts, you may not know what it the best action in every instance. In my view, the better firewalls shield you from most of this activity by making intelligent choices on your behalf. They aren't perfect, but they make well-reasoned compromises.

See the following link for some firewall reviews. Type the link into your browser.

http://www.consumersearch.com/www/computers/firewalls_internet_security_software/reviews.html

I use Trend Micro's PC-cillin Internet Security 2004. It, along with ZoneAlarm Pro are editors' choices

from PC World. Norton AntiVirus is a PC Magazine editor's choice.

DIAL-UP VERSUS BROADBAND OR DSL

Theoretically, dial-up users are less at risk than those who are connected to the Internet 24/7. However, that advantage is negated by the fact that dial-up users are far less likely to stay current on anti-virus signatures and other critical updates because it takes so long to download the required updates, and interferes with the way they work.

Broadband and DSL users can set their computers to automatically download the latest updates without any intervention on their part. The downloads are set to occur during slack times.

PHOTO SHARING OPTIONS - [EXPRESS YOURSELF](#)

LET'S COUNT THE MANY WAYS TO SHARE PHOTOS



Sharing photos is one of life's many joys. Photos refresh our memories of important events, and they enable others to experience what we saw. Photos can capture the arrival of a new baby and the highlights of life's journey through the years. They can capture the vistas and wonders we see on vacations, and express the truly creative side of our personality.

The computer is a marvelous means to share your photos with others. Here are just some of the many ways to share that are open to you.

- Burn movies/slideshows, or individual photos, to CDs
- Create calendars, e-cards (electronic postcards), and greeting cards with your photos
- Create online photo albums
- Create a storybook slideshow with music and more
- E-mail selected photos
- Exchange photos
- Mail photos
- Print photos
- Upload photos to a photo sharing website



The following provides additional information

about some of the options.

CREATE A STORYBOOK MOVIE



Create a movie of your individual photos complete with narration, music, manual or automatic zoom and pan transitions, and special effects. The process is called storybooking, or storyboarding.

Import the photos that you want to include in your story), arrange them in the sequence in which you want them shown. Add text, transitions and sound. Save your show to a CD, send it by e-mail message, or save and use it on a computer.

Windows Movie Maker is included with XP-SP2), download *PhotoStory 3* for Windows XP for free at (www.microsoft.com/windowsxp/using/digitalphotography/photostory/default.mspx), *Adobe Photoshop Album*, *Jasc Paint Shop Photo Album*, and *Roxio Easy Media Creator (VideoWave)*, are good examples of programs that assist you in putting together these very dramatic and pleasing shows.

BURN A SLIDESHOW OF YOUR PHOTOS TO A VIDEO CD.

Video CD's are used in DVD players to display photos on

a television set. Digital slideshows mimic conventional slide shows projected onto a screen. However, with the digital versions you can add clever page-effects that are not possible with physical slide presentations. Products such as Adobe Photoshop Album, and Jasc Paint Shop Pro and Paint Shop Photo Album, present your photos in highly stylized ways. The album programs produce the look and feel of conventional photo album pages while sometimes adding music to the mix. It is great to see your photos displayed in full-screen size. Not all programs support the Video CD format. For instance, Microsoft Movie Maker cannot be saved in VCD. Instead, it uses a new program called HighMat with advanced capabilities, but the results can only be viewed on HighMat aware devices. Only a few such devices exist at this time, but more will be added.

Your photos can be automatically grouped on each page and displayed in multi photo layouts with borders and corners. You pick from a list of layout styles from funky to formal.

Irfanview (free from www.irfanview.com) produces very simple slideshows, but without any special effects. Unfortunately, the program supports only *Nero* in burning your show as a video CD to be played on your Television via a DVD player. Nevertheless, you can save your show to a

CD in format compatible with your computer. To view it, double click the file on the CD to start the show.

If you have not already done so, download *Irfanview* and experiment with it. The program is a file viewer, batch file format converter, and slideshow generator.

USE A PHOTO SHARING WEBSITE

Use a photo website to upload your photos so that others can see them and order prints online of any of the photos that they want. The prints are mailed.

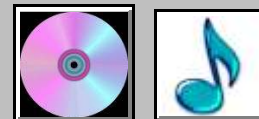
Most photo editing software programs include a dedicated link to a photo sharing website such as *Shutterfly*, *Ofoto*, *PhotoWorks*, *Snappfish*, *PictureTrail*, and of course, *Kodak* (through *Costco*). *Picasa* from Google is the newest addition to this field. If you plan to store your photos on a site for more than a year, pick a well-established vendor, such as *Shutterfly*. If the vendor's photo sharing site disappears so will your photos stored on that site.

Cut and paste the following AARP link into your browser for more information.

<http://www.aarp.org/computers-features/Articles/a2004-06-10-photosharing.html>

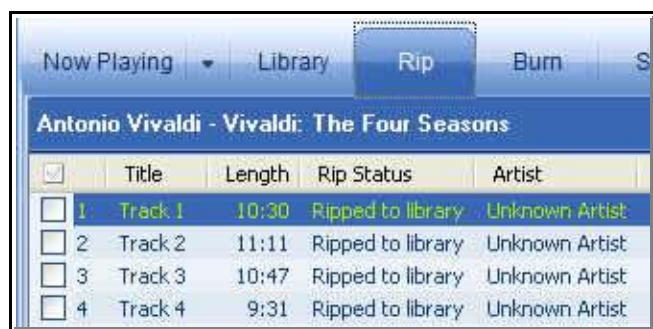
RIP (COPY) MUSIC

CREATE YOUR OWN MUSIC COLLECTIONS



See http://www.microsoft.com/windows/windowsmedia/knowledgecenter/howto/rip_how_to.aspx

Use *Windows Media Player 10* to quickly rip songs from your audio CDs to put together customized albums of songs for your listening enjoyment. You probably own collections



of music CDs that you bought due to one or two tracks on each CD. Those songs are your favorites. Why not put

together CDs with just the song selections you want to hear in the order in which you want to hear them?

These days the process of ripping songs could not be any easier IF you own a CD drive that also burns CDs. Download *Media Player 10* if it is not already installed on your computer. Version 10 searches for information online about the audio CDs you insert in your CD drive, and makes selecting individual tracks a snap. It also supports portable music devices.

It improves on versions 8 and 9 in burning CDs and includes many worthwhile new features. *Window Media Player 10* does a good job of burning CDs that can be played on your car CD player.

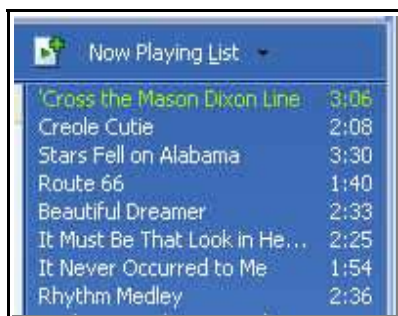
Insert the CD from which you want to copy songs, double click the icon for the CD in *My Computer*, or *Explorer*, and select "Rip" from the *Windows Media* menu along the top.

as shown in the screen shot. Select only the tracks you want or all of them from an album and click on Rip. The ripped tracks are added to your library of music. As each track is copied, your selection checkmark disappears and the status of the track shows that it was “Ripped to library.”

The progress of the ripping process is shown in a percentage of completion bar as each track is ripped.

CREATE A PLAY LIST

Select one album at a time from the Media Player library and drag the tracks you want to burn, or just to play, to the play list at the right of your screen. Select other albums in turn and add selected



tracks to your play list. When you are done, insert a blank CD, and click burn. Shortly, you will have a custom music CD. The Media Player utilizes an online database to help provide information about each music album. If such information is missing, edit the title information. Right click on the Title heading and insert the titles included on the back of CD.

Click on Tools, Options, and review the settings associated with each of the tabs. Pick the ones that best fit your needs. For instance, you might select a high quality level if you are not trying to fit a very large music collection on one CD. Experiment with different qualities to determine what works for you.

You might rip music selections to include with your movie or slideshow presentations as background music. Music

helps creates and sustains a mood during the showing of your presentations.

	Title	Artist	Album
1	Spring	Antonio Vivaldi	Vivaldi: The Four Seasons
2	Summer	Antonio Vivaldi	Vivaldi: The Four Seasons
3	Autumn	Antonio Vivaldi	Vivaldi: The Four Seasons
4	Winter	Antonio Vivaldi	Vivaldi: The Four Seasons
5	Track 5	Antonio Vivaldi	Vivaldi: The Four Seasons
6	Track 6	Antonio Vivaldi	Vivaldi: The Four Seasons
7	Track 7	Antonio Vivaldi	Vivaldi: The Four Seasons
8	Track 8	Antonio Vivaldi	Vivaldi: The Four Seasons
9	Track 9	Antonio Vivaldi	Vivaldi: The Four Seasons
10	Track 10	Antonio Vivaldi	Vivaldi: The Four Seasons

ALTERNATIVES

Windows Media Player is by no means the only game in town. However, Microsoft is trying to make the experience so easy that you will prefer to stick with their product. Each vendor offers there own means to purchase songs and thus to generate revenue.

Other vendors who hope you will choose their players and features are RealOne (free and Plus versions), MusicMatch Jukebox 9 (free and Plus versions), and WinAmp 5 (free and Pro versions). Roxio Easy Media Creator 7 is a bundle of CD burner software that aids you in copying music, data, photos, and video to CDs or DVDs.

CREATE CD FOLDER ICONS

When you rip tracks with the Media Player, Windows attempts to create an album folder icon. If the album cover is not included in their database, search for the cover icon using cdnow.com, amguide.com, or scan the cover from the CD jewel case. Right click on the album icon and save the file to the related folder as **folder.jpg** to display the album cover.

Q AND A (QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS)



WHY CAN'T I RECEIVE E-MAIL ATTACHMENTS?

In Outlook Express, check your security settings. Click on Tools, Option, Security and remove the checkmark in the box that says “Do not allow attachments . . .” Also remove the checkmark to block images if you want to receive downloaded images.

By default, Windows XP SP2 reset the attachments option to block attachments and added a new option to block images. If you are using an up-to-date anti-virus product, the settings to block attachments and downloaded images should be unnecessary.

While you're at it, check each of your e-mail settings including those on the spelling tab. That way you will know whether any of the other settings changed. Update your settings to reflect your current needs.