

The Bite of the Computer Virus

What is a computer virus? It is important to understand the meaning and the consequences of a computer virus before launching into specifics of virus protection and data loss recovery. More than 7% of data loss occurs due to computer viruses every year. A computer virus can be defined as a disruptive computer program having the capacity to spread like wild fire in computer software damaging or destroying everything in its path. Usually computer viruses are spread through malicious human intent to jeopardize critical software containing important information. One should beware of new emails, CDs and even floppy diskettes as these usually contain viruses. Computer viruses are like parasites reproducing to destroy within a limited time period only on certain days and times.

Thus, protection against computer viruses is a must, especially in this modern technological society. The safest and quickest preventive way is to have a backup of all your information. In this way, even if you have a computer virus and have to shut down your computer, your data is not lost.

Preventive Measures

- Having the latest and most up-to-date antivirus software installed in your system. This is tough as virus creators try very hard to keep a step ahead of antivirus software program writers. The common and effective antivirus software programs are Dr Solomon, McAfee, Sophos and Norton/Symantec. These software programs usually cost about 50 pounds but can also be downloaded for free from the Internet. Usually, every computer has antivirus software installed inside for data protection.
- Do not open any email attachment from any unknown person. Usually letters and email messages from unknown people/ senders may appear on your email. It is better not to open them as they may contain viruses. Even floppies and CDs on magazine covers have been known to be virus containers. In case one feels compelled to open email messages thinking that it could contain important information from a known source, it is always advisable to call the source and confirm that the message was sent by them. Further, it is also recommended that one should never use or accept unsolicited floppies or ZIP disk and CDs. In case of doubt, it is always better to check the disk with antivirus software. In this case it is better to be safe than sorry.
- Do not open any files in Word or Excel or don't run any programs in an infected computer. Many computer troubleshooters also advise against reformatting of the hard drive and disk as this could lead to a permanent data loss. In addition, when suspecting a virus attack, one should not reboot or press the ESCAPE key on the computer keyboard. In order to protect Word and Excel files during a virus attack, Windows and Macintosh guarantee a system of macro execution i.e. keeping the SHIFT key in operational mode when opening the computer. These guidelines can be obtained through the administrative guide developed by Windows.
- The common and easiest method is to have backups of all your files to prevent sole dependency on technology for data storage. In addition, one ought to call the computer experts to deal with the virus attack. It should be remembered that data loss is only temporary if virus attacks are promptly dealt with. Usually, when the virus is removed from the hard drive data files become accessible.

New computer viruses are generated every day. Computer viruses are one of the primary reasons for the destruction of important business and military information. Along with electronic backup, it is suggested that one ought to document critical information on paper. This is basically a safety net, but the best method to guard against virus attacks is prevention. One needs to be aware of the possibility of virus contamination and constantly check email attachments and new floppies and digital media equipment. One ought to buy digital media devices only from reputable sources.

Virus attacks are common in Universities where, a system of central mail scanning has been devised. The current viruses do not show any outward signs of computer infection and this makes it harder to detect any sort of viruses. These viruses possess the ability to spread fast and destroy not only your work but also work of your colleagues e.g. contamination of university computers though a single virus is common as all the computers are linked to one single network. Thus, if the virus infects one computer, it can reproduce and infect all the other computers connected to the same drive. Hence, it is better to be careful in the usage of computers and always be aware that the machine is susceptible to diverse problems and troubles if not used properly.

Source: <http://www.articlecircle.com>

About the Author

James Walsh is a freelance writer and copy editor. For more information on [Data Recovery](http://www.fields-data-recovery.co.uk) see <http://www.fields-data-recovery.co.uk>