

Re: XP Firewall or Zone Alarm ?

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http://www.tech-archive.net/Archive/WinXP/microsoft.public.windowsxp.help_and_support/2005-06/msg06787.htm

- *From:* Bruce Chambers <bchambers@xxxxxxxxxxxxx>
 - *Date:* Wed, 29 Jun 2005 19:37:05 -0600
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Steve wrote:

Hi there,

I have recently built a new (latest Intel spec.) computer and have now, because I use RAID etc, have had to move on from Windows ME. I liked Windows ME and it was a reluctant move, but now after 6 weeks I REALLY like XP and am a convert never though I would say that !

Up to now, I have just used the XP 'built-in' firewall, whereas on ME I used Zone Alarm (purchased version, NOT the free one).

My questions are these :-
Shall I just stick with the in-built one or install Zone Alarm ?
Any benefits either way ?
More importantly, any problems with Zone Alarm and XP ?

Thanks in advance,

Steve

WinXP's built-in firewall is adequate at stopping incoming attacks, and hiding your ports from probes. What WinXP SP2's firewall does not do, is protect you from any Trojans or spyware that you (or someone else using your computer) might download and install inadvertently. It doesn't monitor out-going traffic at all, other than to check for

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IP-spoofing, much less block (or at even ask you about) the bad or the questionable out-going signals. It assumes that any application you have on your hard drive is there because you want it there, and therefore has your "permission" to access the Internet. Further, because the Windows Firewall is a "stateful" firewall, it will also assume that any incoming traffic that's a direct response to a Trojan's or spyware's out-going signal is also authorized.

ZoneAlarm, Kerio, or Sygate are all much better than WinXP's built-in firewall, and are much more easily configured, and there are free versions of each readily available. Even the commercially available Symantec's Norton Personal Firewall is superior by far, although it does take a heavier toll of system performance than do ZoneAlarm or Sygate.

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Bruce Chambers

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You can have peace. Or you can have freedom. Don't ever count on having both at once. - RAH

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