

Re: Networking XP home & PRO computers w/Linksys Router

Source:

http://www.tech-archive.net/Archive/WinXP/microsoft.public.windowsxp.network_web/2004-07/0252.html

From: Chuck (*none_at_example.net*)

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On Thu, 1 Jul 2004 12:25:02 -0700, "Derek" <Derek@discussions.microsoft.com> wrote:

>Dear Chuck,

>

>Just want to ask one more question. The Linksys Router is connected to the internet. It is a firewall that prevents other people from seeing the network. I you open (guest account), is that a security threat?

Derek,

The Linksys router uses NAT to route solicited network traffic to the computer. Unsolicited (malevolent) network traffic goes nowhere, producing a firewall effect.

The router is one component of protection. It only filters incoming network traffic.

Other bad stuff that you need to defend against is spyware and viruses. An attack of either, directed against a weak (well known) object such as the Guest account, could infect your computer. For that reason, use of the Guest account is not encouraged.

Since you have an XP Home system, however, you cannot avoid use of the Guest account. But, you can protect yourself in other ways.

Install a personal firewall on both computers. A good firewall for novices is ZoneAlarm (free) from <<http://www.zonelabs.com/store/content/home.jsp>>. A personal firewall will defend you against any incoming attack thru the NAT router, plus defend you against unwanted outgoing traffic from installed spyware or viruses.

Use AntiVirus protection. Realtime, plus a regularly scheduled virus scan. Regularly updated.

Use Adware / spyware protection. Realtime, plus a regularly run adware /

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spyware scan. Regularly updated.

Complete instructions, using Spybot S&D and HijackThis (both free) are here:

<<http://forums.spywareinfo.com/index.php?showtopic=227>>.

Harden your browser. There are various websites which will check for vulnerabilities, here are three which I use.

<http://www.jasons-toolbox.com/BrowserSecurity/>

<http://bcheck.scanit.be/bcheck/>

https://testzone.secunia.com/browser_checker/

Block Internet Explorer ActiveX scripting from hostile websites (Restricted Zone).

<<https://netfiles.uiuc.edu/ehowes/www/main.htm>> (IE-SpyAd)

Set up blocking of known dangerous scripts from installing.

<<http://www.javacoolsoftware.com/spywareblaster.html>>

Block known spyware from installing.

<<http://www.wilderssecurity.net/spywareguard.html>>

Harden your operating system. Check at least monthly for security updates.

<http://windowsupdate.microsoft.com/>

Block possibly dangerous websites with a Hosts file. Three Hosts file sources I use:

http://www.accs-net.com/hosts/get_hosts.html

<http://www.mvps.org/winhelp2002/hosts.htm>

(The third is included, and updated, with Spybot (see above)).

Maintain your Hosts file (merge / eliminate duplicate entries) with:

eDexter <http://www.accs-net.com/hosts/get_hosts.html>

Hostess <<http://accs-net.com/hostess/>>

Secure your operating system, and applications. Don't use, or leave activated, any accounts with names or passwords with trivial (guessable) values. Don't use an account with administrative authority, except when you're intentionally doing administrative tasks.

Use common sense. Don't install software based upon advice from unknown sources. Don't install free software, without researching it carefully. Don't open email unless you know who it's from, and how and why it was sent.

Stay educated. Know what the risks are. Stay informed. Read Usenet, and various web pages that discuss security problems. Check the logs from the other layers regularly, look for things that don't belong, and take action when necessary.

Cheers,

Chuck

Paranoia comes from experience – and is not necessarily a bad thing.

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