

## Internet Security

The Internet is fast becoming part of our daily lives. We use it to shop, bank, search for information and communicate with friends and family. While surfing and transacting online is a convenient and rewarding experience, unfortunately, there are online criminals who want a piece of the action, so it is important to be aware of potential risks and what you can do to protect yourself and your computer.

## Potential Threats on the Internet

### Viruses

Some strange people get pleasure from destroying other people's computers by putting malicious viruses on the Internet which can enter your computer and damage or destroy your files. A virus attempts to spread from computer to computer by infecting another file. They can also get into your computer from discs or USB memory sticks that you use to transfer files, so only use files from people you can trust.

### Spyware

Spyware is unwanted software that secretly collects and transmits information about you through your Internet connection without your knowledge. It might scan your files for personal information or give outsiders control over your computer. It can also infect your computer. It might make it run slow or display annoying pop-up messages.

## Protect Yourself

1. Make backup copies of your files and store them in a safe place – CD, USB memory stick, or use an online backup service e.g. [www.backblaze.com](http://www.backblaze.com)
2. Make sure you have security software installed on your computer, such as a firewall and anti-virus software

### Firewall

A firewall stops people from connecting to your computer without your permission. Fortunately a firewall is included free with Microsoft Windows and is turned on by default and will update automatically.

### Anti-Virus

Anti-virus software will protect you from threats by:

- scanning incoming emails for attached viruses
- monitoring files as they are opened or created to make sure they are not infected
- performing periodic scans of every file on the computer

Don't panic! You may already have security software installed on your computer. If not, there are many products you can choose from.

Anti-virus software packages often offer both a free version and a version that you pay for. In most cases, these free products are scaled-back versions of commercial products to which the software manufacturer hopes you will buy one day.

Several companies offer free downloadable trial versions of their software that range from 3 to 12 months e.g. Avast [www.avast.com](http://www.avast.com), AVG [www.avg.com](http://www.avg.com), Norton [www.norton.com](http://www.norton.com), and McAfee [www.mcafee.com](http://www.mcafee.com)

**Microsoft Security Essentials** is a free antivirus software product for Microsoft Windows operating systems [www.microsoft.com](http://www.microsoft.com)

## Activity

**Check to see if your computer has anti-virus software installed**

If anti-virus software has been installed on your computer, it will run every time your computer is switched on and should be visible in the start bar on the bottom right-hand corner of your desktop



**Move your mouse over the small icons (pictures), the names of the programmes will appear.**



look for an anti-virus icon- it could be AVG, Norton, McAfee, Avast, Microsoft Security Essentials or similar

**If you find an anti-virus icon, right-click on it and open the product**

**Are you protected?**