The Importance of Virus Protection

As everyone should know, having virus protection is very important for the health of your computer. Viruses can wreak havoc on your system, and severely impact your ability to be successful in online classes. Here's what you should know about this important topic.

1. Anti-virus software will not protect your computer unless it is regularly updated and run.

- Virus information goes "out of date" and must have the latest updates installed to provide protection against the latest malware. Some anti-virus software does this automatically, but you need to check your settings to be sure.
- Your anti-virus scanner needs to run at least once daily to catch anything lurking on your machine. Most have a scheduling feature that will run it automatically, but check your settings to be sure. Even better are features that run constantly in the background to scan all incoming email, web pages, downloads, etc.

NOTE: If you got anti-virus software with a new computer, it is only temporary and will expire, leaving you without protection. If you don't wish to pay for the renewal, please see the section below about free alternatives.

2. Anti-virus software may not be enough.

Depending on the features of your software, it may not catch all the different types of malware out there. For example, some scan only for viruses but not for spyware. You may wish to use additional layers of protection for the different types of malware [see list below].

Free Alternatives

WARNING: Be aware that there are some viruses that masquerade as anti-virus software, so be careful if you look on the internet for this type of software. The items listed below are known to be legitimate and safe. Be sure to look for the free version, as many of these companies also have paid resources. Look for the green "download now" button at the top of each description.

Anti-virus Software

AVG Free http://download.cnet.com/AVG-Anti-Virus-Free-Edition/3000-2239_4-10320142.html?tag=mncol;pop

Avast Home Edition http://download.cnet.com/Avast-Home-Edition/3000-2239_4-10019223.html?tag=mncol;pop

Avira AntiVir Personal http://download.cnet.com/Avira-AntiVir-Personal-Free-Antivirus/3000-2239_4-10322935.html?tag=mncol

Other Software

Ad-Aware http://download.cnet.com/Ad-Aware-Anniversary-Edition/3000-8022_4-10045910.html?tag=mncol;pop

Spybot http://download.cnet.com/Spybot-Search-amp-Destroy/3000-8022_4-10122137.html?tag=mncol;pop