

Computer Systems Hygiene

When humans were living in small, isolated bands, we could operate without a lot of rules. As we gathered into larger and larger groups and started trading long distances, we were forced to learn rules of hygiene. New diseases spread through what had been common practices and we had to change our ways. We learned to isolate sick people. We learned to wash our hands often and learned other practices. Pandemics rightfully scared us.

We are at the same point with computers. Viruses and malware get computers “sick” if not “killed”. The Internet is crowded with viruses and pandemics are happening. It is time to look at computer hygiene and what are the best practices to avoid the computer getting sick.

Recently, a “ransomware” hit Norsk Hydro (a major Aluminum producer) and they are back to using pen and paper. All their computers have been killed by this virus.

It is time to think of the Internet as a polluted swamp. Yes, there are nice places in it, there are beautiful items, but it is polluted and needs to be treated the same way as a polluted river. Would you go swimming downriver from where raw sewage is dumped?

Best practices for computers mirror those we use when dealing with human infections. When a disease is common, we use multiple levels of protection.

When we have a newborn child or a person with a compromised immune system, we put that person in isolation

from potential diseases and often, use multiple levels of isolation. Similarly, when we have a computer system with highly valuable information, the best practice is to have multiple levels of strong isolation up to and including no connection to the Internet.

Health professionals often stick people with needles. Those needles can pick up any disease the person has. The best practice is to use needles only once.

Similarly, with computer systems, discs and memory sticks can pick up any virus a computer has. The best practice is to use those only once.

When a virus is rampant in the human population, we use gloves, masks, frequent hand washings, and other techniques to keep from bringing home

what is out in the marketplace. Similarly, with computers, we use antivirus programs, multiple hardware firewalls, frequent system scans, constant system upgrades, and tools that examine incoming emails to avoid bringing into the system any virus that is rampant on the Internet.

And then, there are those who have to enter the sewer systems for professional reasons. They suit up in protection suits, boots, and sometimes, full isolation suits in order to enter such hazardous waters. They do this for their own safety. People who dive into infected web sites, the dark web, or systems they know are infected have to take similar precautions. They will use systems dedicated to just this task, ones that can be properly cleaned, or used just one time.

We do well to learn proper computer hygiene as there are computer pandemics running rampant already.

Isolation And Frequent Washing

Facebook or Happiness?

Right now, most Americans are spending more hours viewing content such as TV, Facebook, Videos, etc. or playing video games than we do sleeping. The result is that a majority of people are mildly depressed, certainly sleep deprived, and this pursuit of happiness isn't making us happy. What are the factors that really make us happy?

WebMD has a seven-point program for happiness. The first step is to seek happiness. We can follow the Declaration of Independence and pursue happiness. It becomes a matter of identifying what makes us happy and choosing that over the alternatives.

Second point is to cultivate gratitude. We tend to be happier when we focus on what we already have instead of thinking that we are missing out on something.

The next two points are foster forgiveness and counteract negative thoughts. These fit together as many a negative thought is due to holding a grudge. Certainly, our road rage is harming our happiness.

Give up the pursuit of money above our needs. Our workaholic culture rewards those who kill themselves for the company. But our health and happiness are also casualties in that fight.

Finally, build friendships and do activities that are meaningful. For most of us, these two go together also. When we do meaningful activities with others, we build friendships and enhance our own happiness.

While Facebook and other online forums can help us share our lives with others, it is clear that our lives exist in the real world instead of online. Seek happiness there.

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Risky World

There are reports that repressive governments are looking at Artificial Intelligence to select who in the population are most susceptible to propaganda and targeting them with messages. With the rise of the “deep fakes” in pictures and videos, such governments are able to manipulate people more.

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