

Your computer is probably a very important tool in your household. It can do many things—from entertaining you with multimedia clips of upcoming movies or songs from your favorite band, to online banking or stock trading. The information stored on your computer can also be extremely valuable (like those pictures of your grandkids, for example).

You may be thinking “But I don’t store any vital information on my computer.” Even if you’re not worried about losing information, your computer is still at risk because it is subject to intruders that can use your computers to attack other systems. Systems used for this purpose are called “Zombies.” Sophos, an antivirus company, esti-

software. This would be Microsoft for most people reading this article. Apple has a similar product built-in as well.

Windows Update is the utility used to download and install patches and updates on your system. The newer versions of this utility can be configured to do this automatically to make it easier on you. On a recently installed system I built, there were 41 critical updates that I needed to download AFTER I installed windows 2000. This may take a little time, but is very important to do. Simply downloading the updates will get your operating system up-to-date and patched, but what about antivirus?

Antivirus programs are a must. There are new viruses coming out every week. So what is a person to do? Two

Getting the most out of your computer

by Ben Neuman

mates half a million zombie PCs are operating worldwide; other sources put the figure as high as two million. This all can happen without you noticing anything out of the ordinary.

This two part article will help you defend and protect your computer from such dangers. This first part will deal with keeping your system current and avoiding viruses and unwanted intruders; and the second part will address spyware.

It’s important to keep your system current. This, in no way, means rushing out to the store and buying the latest and greatest software available. Keeping your system current means staying up-to-date with security fixes and software patches that are issued free from the makers of your

things: Get some antivirus software AND keep it current. Lots of people get antivirus software or it comes pre-installed on their computer. That’s a great start, but you’re not done yet. Antivirus software written today and not updated cannot detect a virus written next month. Antivirus software needs to have its virus definitions updated frequently. Some companies charge a subscription rate for this like Symantec/Norton, McAfee and Panda. There is a free program called AVG antivirus that is available for personal use only. All programs are good, and will put you on the road to virus-free computing!

Watch for next month’s column on protecting yourself from sneaky spyware!



CONNECTIONS

A bi-monthly publication for the valued customers of OmniTel Communications

Who wants better cellular?

Get unlimited cellular calling with new



service coming soon from **OmniTel!**

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Put more money in your pocket every month with **OmniTel's new FLAT RATE plan.**

Page 4

Protect your computer from viruses and unwanted intruders.

Learn how on page 8!



One Call,
One Stop,
One Shop!

OmniTel Communications is a leader among Iowa's premier telecommunications companies, providing a single point of contact for all our customers' telecom needs. OmniTel is committed to offering the most advanced products and services, providing our customers with the best customer care, product knowledge, technology and repair. OmniTel is always striving to exceed our customers' expectations.

OmniTel Communications
608 E. Congress
Nora Springs, IA 50458

Business Office
749-2531

Out of Local Calling Area
1-877-OMNITEL
After Hours Repair
1-800-417-8685
Tech Support
1-877-666-4932

 **OmniTel**
COMMUNICATIONS
Telephone • Cable TV • Internet • Cellular

OmniTel Cares

OmniTel donates over \$20,000 to support our communities

OmniTel Communications is pleased to announce the recipients of OmniTel's final grants for 2004: Stacyville Community Club Brat Daze, Rudd Park Board, Greene Farmers and Merchants, Nora Springs Buffalo Days, Riceville Dollars for Scholars and Nora Springs Youth Football.

OmniTel is proud to support the local organizations that support our communities

A total of 58 local organizations received an OmniTel Grant during 2004 totaling more than \$21,000!

The first grant of 2005 was recently awarded to the Sunset Generation of Rockford.

OmniTel Communications grants are awarded in January, March, July and October of each year. They are open to non-profit organizations in all of the communities OmniTel serves.

To apply for a grant go to the OmniTel website at www.omnitel.biz. Click on information and charity grants. The forms may be printed out and sent into OmniTel Communications.

Better cellular service is coming to town!

If you've noticed some new tower construction underway this winter, it's because better cellular service will be available in your area soon!

In the next few months, OmniTel will begin offering i wireless cellular service to all of North Iowa! We will have five convenient locations including **Nora Springs, St. Ansgar, Greene, Charles City and Cresco!**

i wireless is one of the leading wireless providers in Iowa. A T-Mobile affiliate, i wireless offers a new type of calling plan that other local cellular providers don't offer. With i wireless you can get MEGAtalk® service.



i wireless
A T-Mobile AFFILIATE

This service allows you to call from our area (and lots of other areas in Iowa) to most of Iowa and parts of Illinois unlimited for only \$39 a month. THERE ARE NO RESTRICTIONS! You don't have to worry about going over your minutes, or calling at night or on weekends, because the calling is unlimited! If you want to call every minute of every day, it's still only \$39!

If you make most of your cellular calls from our area to other areas in Iowa, this plan could save you a lot of money every month and give you the freedom to call when you want as much as you want without worrying about extra charges. MEGAtalk® service also includes FREE voice mail, caller ID and call waiting, as well as other extras. And, the service is flexible. You can pre-pay for service, pay month-to-month, and even expand the area that you can call.

i wireless also includes lots of other great plans with night minutes starting at 5:00!

Once we begin offering i wireless service, you can come right into any of our locations, browse phones and plans, and activate your service right on the spot. We'll carry a wide variety of the latest phones including flip phones, picture phones, MP3 player phones and more. And with number portability, you can switch your wireless service to i wireless and keep your same phone number! You can also come to us with any questions or problems with your wireless phone or wireless service, or stop in at any i wireless dealer location for assistance at any time!

We are very excited about the ability to offer you the very best in wireless phone service. Look for more details coming soon!



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You talked, we listened!

Thank you to the 625 customers who answered our customer survey a few months ago! OmniTel Communications is dedicated to meeting and exceeding your needs, and your input and suggestions allow us to better structure our services and provide additional services that better meet your needs.

We received an incredible amount of great information,

which gives us a better understanding of what you want from us and how we can better serve you. Some of the initial ways we are responding to your feedback is by bringing you a better cellular service, which you can soon receive from OmniTel. Additionally, our new FLAT RATE plans have been structured in response to the feedback you provided us.

Watch for more upgrades and changes coming soon!

Put more money in your pocket every month

Switch to a new FLAT RATE package for big savings!

We are very excited to offer you a new and easier way to buy your telecom services from OmniTel!

Now, you can pay just one flat, discounted rate, and get all the telecommunications services you need in one convenient package. This allows you to simplify your bill paying, better manage your budget, and write only one check every month. And, because the packages are discounted, you can save BIG—up to \$25 off per month our standard rates!

And choosing a package is simple! It doesn't matter what current services you have from OmniTel. If you want to simplify and save with one of our new packages, just:

- 1 Give us a call at 749-2531 and tell us what package you want. Or, go to our website at www.omnitel.biz.
- 2 We'll add, switch or change your services so you are receiving all the services in the package you choose.
- 3 You'll be billed the new, lower FLAT rate the following month.

Who wants savings? You do!

If you've been thinking about upgrading to high speed Internet, or adding a calling feature like Caller ID or Call Forwarding, now is a great time. Because the more services you choose, the more you save. So choose OmniTel for all your telecom services and watch the savings add up!



OmniTel's new FLAT RATE packages

Our Best Value!

**Phone + Digital Cable TV +
High Speed Internet**

Just \$99.95!

**Save over \$211
per year**

INCLUDES:

- ▶▶ Local phone service
- ▶▶ 30 minutes of nationwide long distance
- ▶▶ Caller ID, Call Waiting, 3-way Calling, Call Forwarding & Caller ID Call Waiting
- ▶▶ High Speed Internet
- ▶▶ Digital Cable TV (over 175 channels!)
- ▶▶ Your Choice of One Premium Movie Package

**Phone + Cable TV +
High Speed Internet**

Just \$82.95!

**Save over \$139
per year**

INCLUDES:

- ▶▶ Local phone service
- ▶▶ 30 minutes of nationwide long distance
- ▶▶ Caller ID, Call Waiting, 3-way Calling, Call Forwarding & Caller ID Call Waiting
- ▶▶ High Speed Internet
- ▶▶ Basic Cable TV (over 65 channels!)

**Phone +
High Speed Internet**

Just \$54.95!

**Save over \$115
per year**

INCLUDES:

- ▶▶ Local phone service
- ▶▶ 30 minutes of nationwide long distance
- ▶▶ Caller ID, Call Waiting, 3-way Calling, Call Forwarding & Caller ID Call Waiting
- ▶▶ High Speed Internet

Long distance is just 10¢ per minute after your 30 FREE minutes with no extra charges or fees!

Phone + Internet

Just \$39.95!

**Save over \$55
per year**

INCLUDES:

- ▶▶ Local phone service
- ▶▶ 30 minutes of nationwide long distance
- ▶▶ Caller ID, Call Waiting, 3-way Calling, Call Forwarding & Caller ID Call Waiting
- ▶▶ Dial-up Internet service

When lightning strikes Simple ways to protect your equipment

Spring produces many thunderstorms with more than our share of lightning. When it is not dazzling us with aerial displays, it's disrupting our lives with power outages, damaging appliances and causing cable TV outages.

While many of our phone cus-

tomers have to purchase new phones or computers after a damaging storm, we recommend the less expensive purchase of a power/surge protector device. A surge protector will guard both the power supply and the telephone line and can save your expensive equipment from damage.

These protectors can be purchased at many discount stores.

An additional defense is to unplug your communications devices during a storm. Remember to "protect and unplug," it's the best defense when lightning strikes.

Broken answering machine? Try Voice Mail!

If your answer machine gets destroyed by lightning or a power surge, why not consider adding Voice Mail instead of replacing your machine? If you're a serious web surfer and you have an answering machine, you may be missing many of your calls while you are online because an answering machine can't

answer calls while you're on the telephone or the Internet.

Voice Mail is a convenient and reliable way to get your messages while you're online, on the phone, away from home or, even if you just don't feel like answering the phone. It's extremely easy to use. Your phone alerts you with a special dial

tone when you have a message. Then, you can either check your messages right from your phone, or from any other touch-tone phone if you're away from home. There is no special equipment to buy and voice mail is reliable—it even works when the power is out!

To try Voice Mail, just call us at 749-2531 and you'll see how easy getting your messages can be!

Keercutter & Associates

We recently asked Lynn Keercutter of Keercutter & Associates in St. Ansgar how working with OmniTel and living in rural Iowa affected her business.

Please describe your business, and how long you have been in the area.

Keercutter & Associates (www.keercutter.com) is a one-year-old home-based business in St. Ansgar. We are an executive search firm. We offer confidential, executive search services on a national level to companies that manufacture decorative products for the residential building products industry. We represent companies that manufacture products like kitchen cabinetry, flooring and decorative plumbing. Our function is to find the top industry talent for the job openings that our clients find challenging to fill. Sometimes we are referred to as “headhunters” but we prefer to be called “matchmakers.”

What OmniTel services do you use in your business?

We had OmniTel's telephone, cable and high speed Internet services at home before we considered owning our own business. For us, choosing OmniTel for our business services was a “no-brainer” because we were very satisfied. As we were putting together our business plan, we had talked to Ronnie Pitzen about what OmniTel could provide



for our start up. It was extremely easy—a great, no-hassle set up. Ronnie sat down with a check sheet and we talked through our business needs and set up a support system and dates for hook up. And OmniTel delivered as promised.

For our business to be successful, we have three specific needs:

#1—98% of our business is conducted over the telephone. So reliable telephone service is extremely important.

#2—Fast, reliable Internet access is very important. We receive and e-mail resumés daily. We set up appointments and confirmations through e-mail. We post positions on websites. We use a background check service through the Internet.

#3—Our computer system must be protected against viruses and junk mail. We love Postini it's just another great OmniTel service that protects and informs us.

How has technology enhanced your business? Five years ago, would your business have been able to function as it does today?

Recruiters have been around since the 1940s. A telephone book, a telephone and a fax machine is all that is really needed. But technology has made things easier and more efficient. In our business, we do a lot of research on companies. The Net makes that so easy. We are located in St. Ansgar, IA, yet we conduct business from coast to coast using our OmniTel products and services every day.

When you talk with others in your field who live in larger cities, how do OmniTel's services compare with the services available to them?

Most of my peer agencies buy their telecom services from different companies and are focused on price.

We prefer the “one stop shop” concept. Price is definitely important, but for our business service is equally, if not more important. I would be more likely to leave a company over service issues than over price issues. I listen to other companies and entertain the idea when I see a difference in price, but I hesitate because I know what kind of service I get with OmniTel. To Keercutter & Associates, service is HUGE. I know what headaches we could have if we switched.

If you would like to be featured in our new “Real Stories” column in a future magazine, or if you've had a special experience with OmniTel that you'd like to share, we'd love to tell your story. Please give us a call or e-mail our office!



How-tooooo!

Helpful tips from the OmniTel Owl to help you learn more about your telecommunications services

You may think that just because I'm an owl, I don't get many annoying phone calls. Well think again! Since I'm up all night anyway, I tend to get more than my fair share. Which is why I found out how to put a stop to seriously annoying and anonymous phone calls.

How to trace a call
It's really simple. If you get a phone call that is scary, threatening, or just annoying and you want to trace the call so that you can give the information to police, just follow these steps:

- 1 - When you get the call**, hang up for a few seconds and then lift the handset up again and listen for dial tone.
- 2 - Press *57** (On a rotary phone dial 1157)
- 3 - Listen for 2 beeps**
(This is your confirmation that the call has been traced.)
- 4 - Hang up**
- 5 - The phone number you traced** will be recorded at the phone company. If you decide to follow up on the matter, please contact the Sheriff's Office for your county. There will be a service charge to release the information to the authorities.

OmniTel can't release the traced phone number to you, but they will release number(s) to the Sheriff directly. The Sheriff prefers you trace each annoying or harassing call several times before turning it over to them. This way, you won't be turning in someone who just accidentally dialed a wrong number!

If you want to learn more, take a look at page 20 of your current OmniTel phone book under Customer Originated Trace. You'll find all kinds of good information there!

Gardening? Planting? Building? Call before you dig!

Did you ever wonder what all those little flags are that appear each spring in your neighbor's yards? Pink, yellow, orange—sprouting from the ground like so many man-made tulips. You may know they have something to do with digging, but what do the colors mean? Do people just choose the ones they like best?

There actually is method, and knowing the green flags from the blue flags can mean the difference between cutting off your electrical supply, or cutting off your water.

Whatever your spring projects bring, don't forget to CALL BEFORE YOU DIG! Whether you plan to plant a tree in the yard, dig a foundation, set a new post, or do any other projects that involve digging, you can save yourself a lot of hassle with a simple call to our “ONE CALL” locating service. It's a free call and there's no charge for the locating service.

Help us to keep your services working properly by calling 1-800-292-8989, 48-hours before you dig!

- Red:** Electric Power Lines, Cables, Conduit and Lighting Cables
- Yellow:** Gas, Oil, Steam, Petroleum or Gaseous Materials
- Orange:** Communication, Alarm or Signal Lines, Cables or Conduit
- Blue:** Water, Irrigation and Slurry Lines
- Green:** Sewers and Drain Lines
- Pink:** Temporary Survey Markings
- White:** Proposed Excavation
- Purple:** Reclaimed Water