



# “Surf Smart”

*How to protect yourself  
from common computer  
infections on the web*



# About the Author

## Chris Conner

Chris Conner (better known to co-workers and customers as just “Conner”) is responsible for managing the anti-virus and backup systems for our clients. His depth of knowledge about these topics and incredible attention to detail have led him to be dubbed as the backup and anti-virus “guru” at Network Depot.



Photo Source: <http://www.denvernetworks.com/it-consulting/network-and-computer-security-consultants/>

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# PART 1:

# The Rise of Technology

*We take the good with the bad*



Photo Source: <http://kreugan.deviantart.com/art/jekyll-and-hyde-181468600>

Computers and technology are an essential part of everyday life. Over the last few decades, the rise of the Internet, E-mail, Smartphones, and Social Media have fundamentally changed the way people communicate with each other, both in personal and professional settings.



Source: <http://itechboy.net/how-smart-phones-are-eating-up-low-end-camera-business>

However, there are two sides to every coin, and it is the same with technology.



Source: <http://mymarriageworks.org/2011/01/31/two-sides-of-the-same-coin/>

On one side of the coin we have technology making our lives easier and opening up new worlds for us.

On the other side of the coin are the threats that have arisen using technology as their medium. With so much information stored online these days, the possibility of identity theft, or a crashing system, can leave the majority of people shaking in their boots.

Although there is no possible way to prevent every computer virus from ever occurring on your computer, there is some good news. By having a secure backup system and by using some basic common sense while browsing, we are able to protect ourselves from the vast majority of computer viruses that exist today.



Source: [http://www.ehow.com/about\\_6596773\\_spyware\\_-malware-virus-protection.html](http://www.ehow.com/about_6596773_spyware_-malware-virus-protection.html)

So that brings up the key question:

**What is common sense while using technology?**

With the ever-changing industry it can seem difficult to keep up, so we have put together some basic guidelines that will help you “Surf Smart” and protect yourself from viruses.



Source: <http://www.cloudtactix.com/quora-the-online-home-for-experts/>



## PART 2:

# Games, Videos, and Other Pretty Things



Photo Source: <http://cute-animals.com/monday-squee-little-kitten-gamer/>

Let's be honest. How many hours a day do we actually spend online watching funny videos of cute animals, or playing games like Bejeweled and Farmville? I know for myself the answer is: probably more time than I should.



Source: <http://www.astraware.com/bejeweled>

With the prevalence of online gaming and the recent boom of pictures and videos, it is important to pay attention so you don't end up downloading a virus in the background. What follows are some simple guidelines to follow when playing games, watching videos, etc.

# 1 Games

So your friend told you about this very cool game that you just *have* to try. You go to their site, read the description, and agree that this is probably the coolest, most exciting, online game that you have ever seen in your life.

You are so excited that you want to start playing immediately, so you click on the “Play Now” button.

And then a pop-up appears. It claims that in order to play this very cool game, you need to download or store something on your computer, otherwise, the game won’t work properly.

Sounds pretty simple and harmless right?

## WRONG.

Anytime a game asks you to download or store something on your computer it is a huge red flag.

*So picture this, but really really big:*



Source: [http://www.wormsandgermsblog.com/articles/animals/horses\\_1](http://www.wormsandgermsblog.com/articles/animals/horses_1)

Chances are, even if the game itself might be safe to play, when you download the game you will also be downloading something in the background, most likely a virus.



Source: <http://www.neoseeker.com/forums/2537/t1713091-words-with-friends-tournament/>

Games that are strictly played online such as Bejeweled, Words With Friends, Farmville, etc. don't carry the same threat since you don't need to download or store anything on your computer in order to play.



Source: [www.facebook.com](http://www.facebook.com)

## 2 Videos

Now let's talk about a different scenario. You are scrolling through Facebook and see a video that your friend posted about this great concert happening in a month.

You click to watch the video because it is one of your favorite bands, and a little pop-up appears telling you that you need to upgrade to the latest version of Flash Player in order to watch the video.

What should you do? Should you click to upgrade?

## The answer: Yes and No

If you want to upgrade to the latest version of Adobe Flash Player you can absolutely do that, but don't click on the link provided in the pop-up. Instead, head over the Adobe website and download the latest version of Flash Player straight from the website. Because you are downloading it right from the original Adobe website, you dramatically decrease your chances of also downloading a virus.



Source: <http://www.downloadatoz.net/download/adobe-flash-player-for-mac/>

### 3 Other Pretty Things

Let's imagine for a moment that you are a huge fan of "The Hunger Games" series. You have read all three books at least five times and saw the movie in theaters every weekend from the time it was premiered.



Source: <http://sites.cdnis.edu.hk/students/042706/2012/04/09/the-hunger-games/>

It seems only right that you should have a great background and screen saver that will show all your co-workers what a dedicated fan you are. You Google search for screen savers of The Hunger Games, and find the perfect one. Now here comes the inevitable question...

Do you download it?



## Answer: That depends on the website.

If the website is a third-party website (a.k.a not a Microsoft website) you probably don't want to download it.



Source: [http://cdn.ttgtmedia.com/rms/computerweekly/photogalleries/245351/2872\\_20\\_unsafe-website.png](http://cdn.ttgtmedia.com/rms/computerweekly/photogalleries/245351/2872_20_unsafe-website.png)

Seems pretty straightforward right? Well don't worry, it gets a little more complicated.

There are some websites that are known as “trusted third party” websites. This means that while it may not be a Microsoft website, Microsoft trusts them and believes that it is safe to download content from their website. If you are not sure whether or not a website is trusted, ask your IT support. If they are not sure, they will be able to find the answer for you.



Source: <http://www.technologyblogged.com/round-ups/8-best-ways-to-earn-website-visitor-trust>

# PART 3:

# Social Media



<http://preducator.wordpress.com/>

Social media sites have become a staple of the global information diet. If you don't exist on a social media site, you are essentially disconnected from the rest of the world. With the boom of social media the last decade, hackers have developed new and interesting ways to use social media to spread viruses. Here are a couple of guidelines that will help you stay safe when using social media.



## 1 Ads

Don't click on the ads. If you see an ad you are interested in, do a Google search for their website and go through that channel. Even if you don't download anything, by clicking on the ads you may be triggering a virus to automatically download in the background.

Another important thing to know about ads has to do with Google's search results. At the top of the results page you will usually see two or three sites that are in a faint beige box, and sometimes bolded, as well as sites listed in the sidebars. These are all ads. These companies pay Google a lot of money to get those spots, and most of the time they don't have any relevant information to your search. When scrolling through Google's search results page it is a good idea to skip those results.

## 2 Pop-up Permission Requests

Have you ever scrolled through your news feed on Facebook, and saw that one of your friends read an article that looks really interesting? You naturally click on it, because hey, you want to read that article too. And of course, a pop-up appears. It tells you that in order to read this article the way your friend read it, you need to allow this app access to your page, and that it will post updates for you every time you read something.



Source: [http://www.securelist.com/en/blog?print\\_mode=1&weblogid=6171](http://www.securelist.com/en/blog?print_mode=1&weblogid=6171)

Best practice? Click cancel. Then try a Google search for the article. Anytime something asks if it can post to your page, chance are you don't want to let it.

# PART 4:

## Other Random “Surf Smart” Tips



<http://www.iconspedia.com/icon/magic-hat-7675.html>

## 1 Clean My PC

If something appears on your computer or on a website that claims to be able to speed up your browsing time, *don't click on it*. In reality, it will download some type of virus in the background and will actually end up making your machine slower.

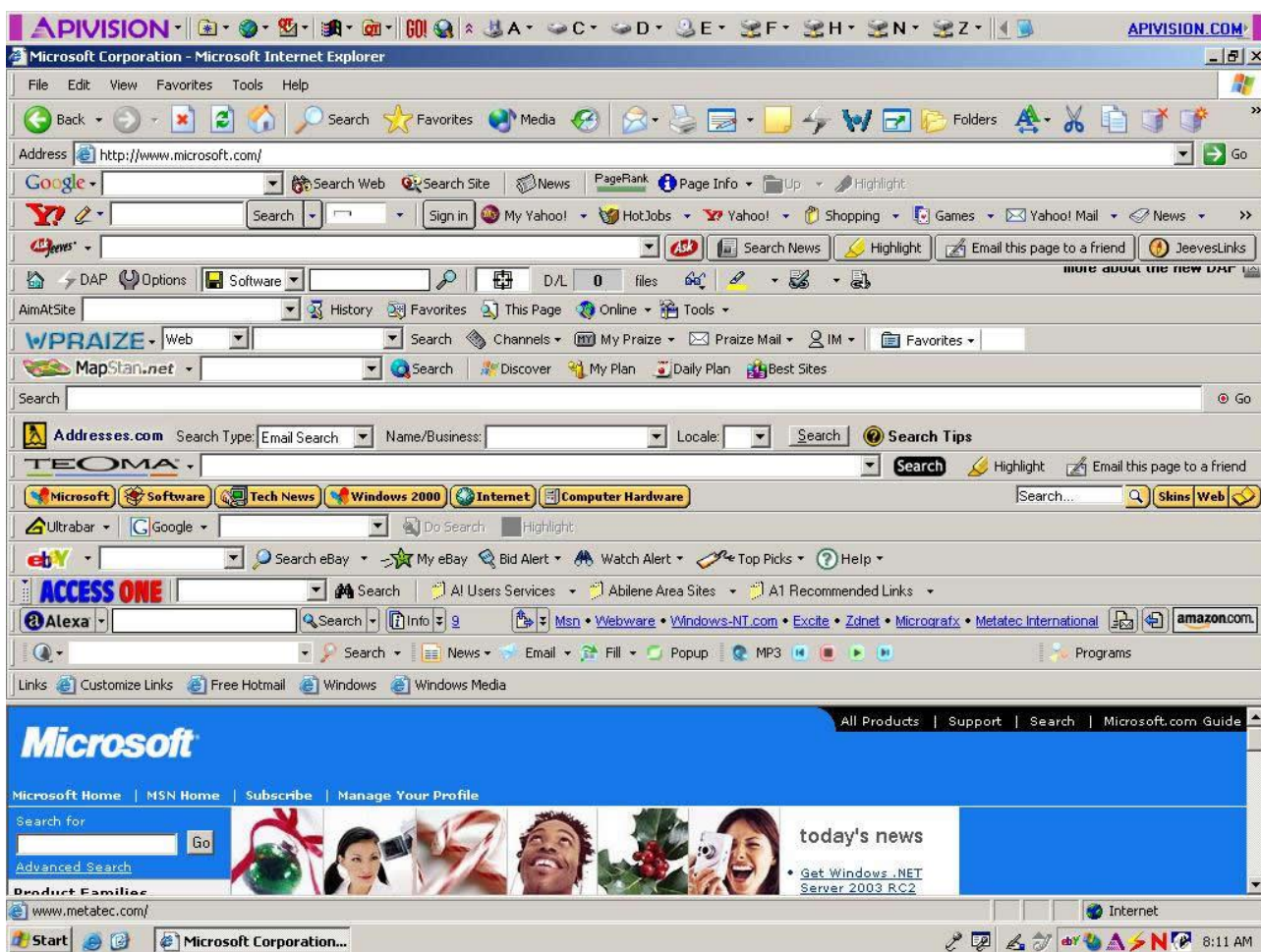


Source: <http://customcomputersmuskegon.com/mycleanpc-scam/>



## 2 Toolbars

Limit the amount of toolbars you have in your browser. Ideally, you don't want to have any. But, if you really want one, stick with just the Google toolbar.



Source: <http://2.bp.blogspot.com/-g9j0hZCylcs/TmYjlm835II/AAAAAAAAAHk/SYXCOUeiKxU/s1600/toolbars.jpg>

### 3 Blocked Websites

If you are using a good anti-virus program, it will automatically block you from sites that it knows are unsafe. In you are trying to get to a website and it blocks you, chances are you don't want to be going to that site anyway.

If you think a mistake was made and that a particular site shouldn't be block, call your IT support. They will be able to explain the reason for the site being blocked, or unblock it if it turns out that it is a safe website.

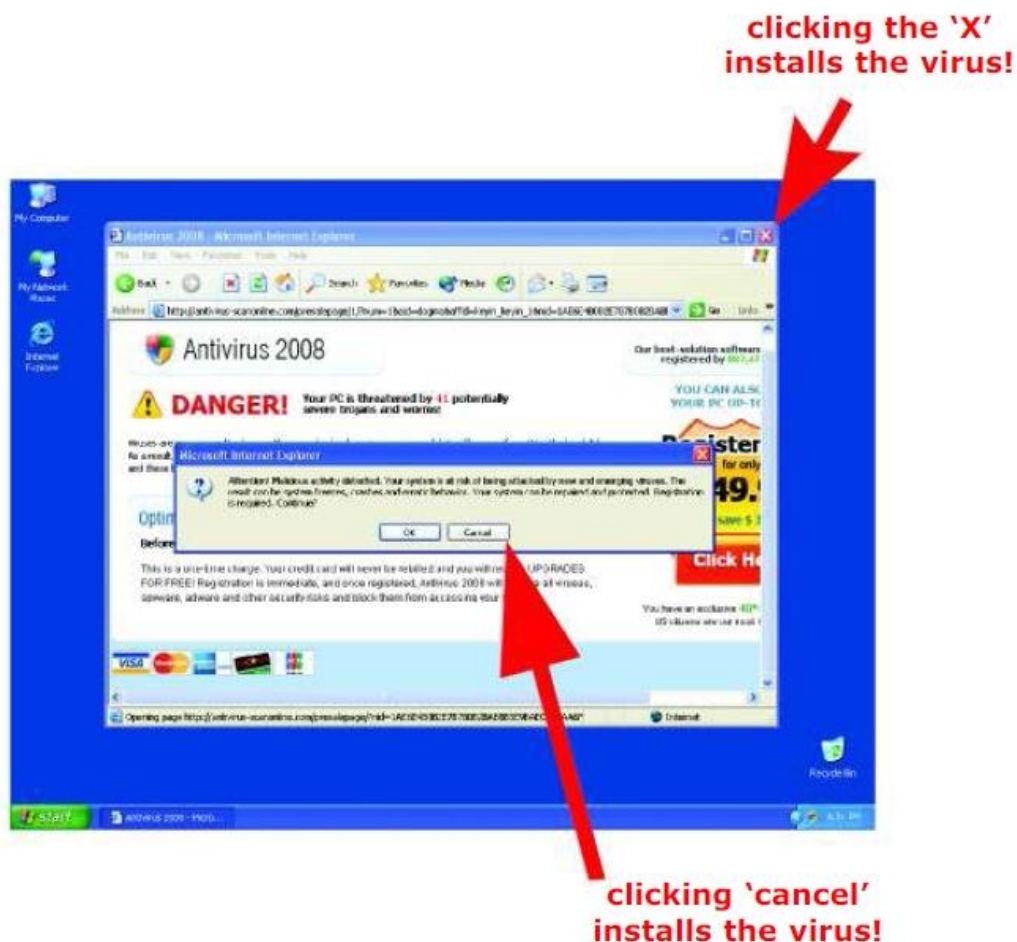


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## 4 "You're Infected" pop-up

If a pop-up appears on your screen that tells you that you are infected with a virus and you need to "click here" to get rid of it, ***don't click anything***. You need to call your IT support right away and let them handle it.

If you try to click cancel of the red "x" on the pop-up or browser itself, that will trigger a virus to automatically download.



Source: <http://www.personalcomputerwizard.com/blog/?cat=12>

As always, if you are in doubt about whether something is safe, get in touch with your IT support. They are there to protect you from viruses and keep you running smoothly.



Source: <http://baxter08.edublogs.org/2008/08/27/technology-use-in-tomorrows-schools/>

# Safe Surfing!

[Is your network secure?](#)  
[Sign up for a FREE Network Assessment](#)  
[and find out!](#)