

THE HAWK I VIEW



Hawk iSolutions Group, Inc.

What's
Inside

Is Anything In Life Really FREE?

**Warning: If You've Downloaded Free Software
From The Internet, Your Computer May Be At Risk For
Viruses, Hackers, and Spyware!**

Is
Anything
In Life
Really

We've all heard the saying that the best things in life are free, but I'm not sure they were referring to software.

Freeware (free software, not to be confused with open source software) such as the AVG anti-virus free edition, Spybot, and Ad-Aware are all programs you can download to your PC for the ultimate discount: free. However, you get what you pay for.

While these programs may work just fine for someone's home computer, they are not business class tools and should not be trusted to completely protect your computer or network from viruses, spyware, hackers, and other problems.

Every month we receive calls from clients whose computers are infected with a nasty virus or a boatload of spyware who had these programs installed and running, and were under the false assumption that they were protected.

Why Freeware Doesn't Protect Your Computer

In most cases, freeware is a light version of a software program that you pay for. Take the AVG free edition for example. AVG offers a free edition of their licensed product as a marketing strategy to get you to buy a copy.

While it will filter most viruses, the AVG free edition does not come with any online, e-mail, or phone support. It is also illegal to use it on multiple machines or in a commercial,

non-profit, or educational environment (single home users only).

You're On Your Own

As you might expect, freeware comes with zero guarantees or promises to function correctly, to be compatible with your system, or to safeguard you from threats. You're not a paying customer so you're on your own to resolve any technical problems you encounter, and you certainly won't get support if your computer gets infected.

Since many free applications are plagued with bugs and incompatibilities, you may end up with a mess on your hands and no one to blame but yourself.

Additionally, freeware programs are not always current with the most up-to-date protection, and don't always update themselves automatically or perform scans and tasks on a regular schedule. That means you could be operating with a false sense of security; and since the sophistication and number of threats circulating are only increasing, you need a comprehensive solution that you can trust especially if your computer or network holds data and files you don't want to lose or make available to a cyber-criminal.

Bottom line: you get what you pay for. If the files, data, pictures, and functionality of your computer or network is of high-importance, then investing in a trusted, industrial-strength software program to protect it is a smart and worthwhile investment.

Learn
about what
the future
holds in
store for
your
Network!

BE
CAREFUL
WITH YOUR
E-MAILS
AND WHAT
YOU REPLY
BACK TO!

Why You *Desperately* Need Proactive Monitoring & Maintenance On Your Network

Have you ever experienced a period of time when your e-mail or Internet service wasn't available to you?

Remember how much it impaired your ability to work? Or maybe you've had an application crash in the middle of a process or document causing you to lose the work you had done up to that point. Pretty frustrating.

However, these are tiny and insignificant compared to the problems that *could* happen when you don't proactively monitor and maintain your network. Let me explain...

Most computer users operate under the false assumption that if everything seems to be working okay on the surface, all systems are fine. However, most computer disasters including virus attacks, data loss, and extensive downtime happen because a critical system or security feature failed *without notifying the user*.

For example, tape backups fail at the rate of 77%. If you are not monitoring your backups on a regular basis and verifying the data, you might discover that it is completely useless to you when you need it the most.

Another common issue is software patches. Hackers are constantly looking for loopholes in software that will allow them to break into your computer to steal data, financial information, or simply cause problems. When one of these loopholes is found, the software vendor issues patches to all of their clients to lock the door. If you are not actively looking for and installing these patches, you are wide open to getting attacked. But the maintenance doesn't stop there - there are dozens more checks and updates that need to happen.

An easy way to understand this concept is to think of your computer like your car. A car will drive just fine for a long time without any maintenance. You can ignore oil changes, rotating the tires and transmission maintenance for thousands of miles before you end up broken down on the side of the road. However, if you wait until your car literally stops

running, you incur far more charges in towing and repairs to get it back on the road, not to mention the hassle of being without your car for that time. That's why it's smart to perform regular maintenance on your car.

Your computer or server is very similar, but requires far more attention and maintenance because of the complexity of the operations it performs, and the constant threat of viruses, hackers, hardware failure, and software conflicts. Every computer that is connected to the Internet, especially through a high-speed connection, needs regular maintenance and monitoring. Some maintenance only needs to be performed weekly or monthly, but some things need to be monitored and maintained every single day, like virus definition, backup, and security updates.

Fortunately, there is an inexpensive and easy way for you to get the maintenance you need to completely avoid - even anticipate and prevent - these problems while making your network far more secure, reliable, and problem free.

It's called our Hawk iLAN plan, coming available soon, and it's designed to provide the critical monitoring and maintenance your network needs 24/7 for a fraction of the time and cost.

The single biggest benefit this service offers to you is peace of mind.

For one flat monthly fee, HiSG will provide remote monitoring of your network to not only ensure that it is running at peak performance, but also that your data is secure. Our company will make sure that your backups are functioning, that your virus definitions are up-to-date, and that your firewall is configured properly, as well as keep an eye on over 100 system processes and alerts that could spell problems brewing.

If you hired a technician - even a junior one - to perform these basic network tasks, it could easily cost you \$40,000 in salary, insurance, and hiring costs. If you were to outsource this type of service, it would easily run you \$800 to \$1,000 a month in hourly, on-site fees. Regardless of the network size,

our goal is to have every one of our clients on this service by the end of 2006 because HISG feels it is *that important*. After all, if HiSG isn't doing everything possible to prevent network problems, we feel as though we are doing you a disservice; and since most of the network problems our clients encounter could have easily been prevented, it only makes sense that we do everything possible to anticipate and prevent these problems from happening in the first place.

If you'd like to learn more about this great new service, please contact me, **John**, at **(314) 727-1174** or e-mail me at **john@hawkisg.com**. I'd be happy to explain in person or on the phone exactly how this service works and how your business can benefit.

Something Phishy in Cyberbpace

An article appeared in the St. Louis Post Dispatch on December 9, 2005. The article simply explains the following:

There is an e-mail going around from the Internal Revenue Service about a scam that asks Internet users to supply personal information, including Social Security, bank account and credit card numbers, as verification for a tax refund. The return e-mail address routes the gullible to a bogus IRS address. Thieves then use the information to steal identities, looting accounts and causing years of financial hassle for their victims.

In geek-speak, this is known as "phishing," trawling for personal information. Phishers set up bogus Web pages called "spook" pages—masquerading as commonly used sites such as e-Bay and PayPal and SunTrust Bank. The more you use your Internet account for secure transactions that generate return e-mail, the more likely you are to be targeted by identity thieves.

Experienced web users are hip to most of these scams, but as more unsuspecting Americans try online shopping and banking, the pool of phish deepens. A study published last week on America Online and the national Cyber Security Alliance said that one in four Americans is phished at least once a month. And of those, seven in 10 get fooled.

Keys to protection: updated antivirus software and spyware and a secure firewall. Never click on a link in an e-mail to reply to a request for information. Check independently for the firm's correct URL, and punch it in manually.

The Lighter Side:

Getting Old

Jacob, age 92, and Rebecca, 89, decide they are going to get married. On a stroll, they see a new drug store in the neighborhood and decide to go in.

Jacob: Do you sell heart medicine?

Pharmacist: Of course we do.

Jacob: How about medicine for circulation, rheumatism and scoliosis? *Pharmacist:* Yes, all kinds.

Jacob: Do you have Viagra? *Pharmacist:* Of course.

Jacob: Medicine for memory problems, arthritis, and jaundice? *Pharmacist:* Yes, a large variety.

Jacob: Sleeping pills and Geritol? *Pharmacist:* Absolutely.

Jacob: Wheelchairs and walkers? *Pharmacist:* All speeds and sizes.

Jacob: Good. We would like to use this store as our Bridal Registry!

- ◆ Old bankers never die, they just lose their interest.
- ◆ Old cashiers never die, they just check out.
- ◆ Old chauffeurs never die, they just lose their drive.
- ◆ Old janitors never die, they just kick the bucket.
- ◆ Old lawyers never die, they just lose their appeal.
- ◆ Old musicians never die, they just get played out.

I'd Love To Hear From YOU!

Is there an article you would like to comment on? Is there a topic you want me to research? Have a funny story or a resource you want to share with the other subscribers? Send it to me! We are always looking for new and useful content to add to Hawk I View.

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- Hardware Sales

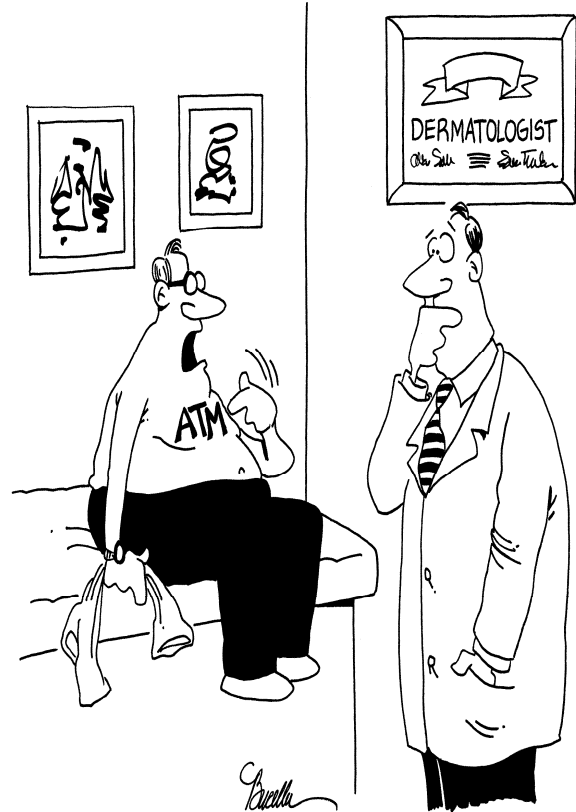
ATTENTION SMALL BUSINESSES:

Get all of the computer support you need without the expense of hiring a full time IT staff. Ask about our Small Business Computer Support Program.

Hawk iSolutions Group, Inc.



**WOULD LIKE
TO WISH
EVERYONE A
HAPPY AND
PROSPEROUS
NEW YEAR FOR 2006!**



"All my kids are grown and have moved out. How much would it cost to remove this tattoo?"