Information Safety Basics

The top 4 things you can do to keep your computer safe and secure

TRANSVASIVE

Transparent and Pervasive Security

Good Morning, Introduction. Genesis of Transvasive: I founded Transvasive to pursue an idea; Behavioral Information Security.

You have a computer.

You can install software.

Four things you can do to improve your personal safety.

INFORMATION SAFETY

To develop the list, I looked at the most common disasters, and the most effective ways I know to protect or prepare.

The Disasters

Malware (viruses)

Malware (again)

Compromised Website

Something Bad Happens

Malware (viruses) infection is by far the most common problem the average home user / small business is likely to face. USB drives are a common infection vector, especially on Windows. Use of malware reflects the changing nature of the internet: it has become a tool of the criminal seeking to commit fraud. Most valuable commodity: banking passwords, especially for business accounts.
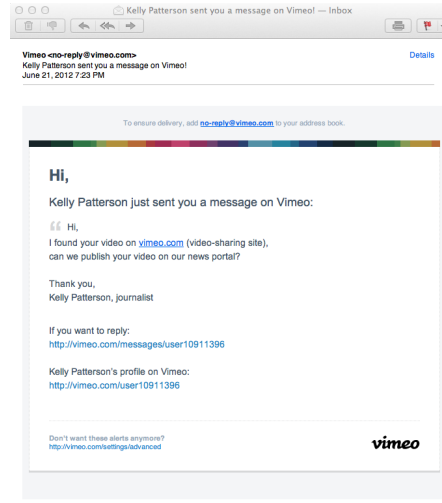
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Sample email I actually got. I can't say that this is malware, and not just spam, but I'm not taking any chances, as I don't have a lab set up. My neighbor's experience with the fake BBB email: (fakeAV: extortion). You can even be hit just by browsing to a legitimate website: The Star Tribune website was recently serving up malware through its ad network (before they were taken down).

The Disasters

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Linked in.

Something Bad Happens

I get to pick on LinkedIn because they were all over the news recently. Even if you protect your own computer perfectly, the services you use may not – and will lose your passwords.
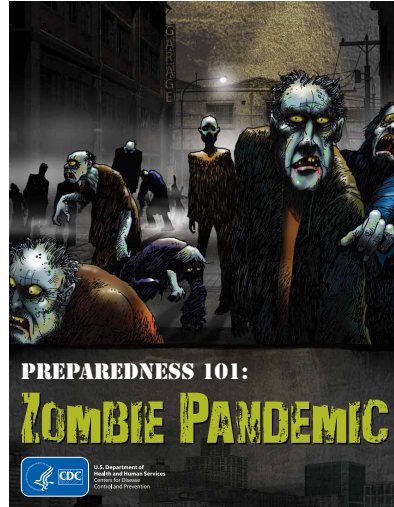
The Disasters

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Something Bad Happens

Something completely unexpected and unpredictable happens, or, something you didn't think of…

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INFORMATION SAFETY

So, what can you do about it?

Q: How many of you back up your system? Weekly? Daily? What if I took your computer and smashed it right now?

DISCLAIMER

these are product recommendations

I try to avoid recommending specific products, but I do so here to save you time looking for your own. I own and use many of these products myself, but not all of them.
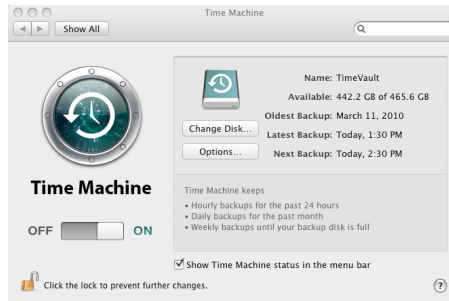
The Precautions

Automatic Backups

Automatic Updates

Anti-Virus

Passwords

AUTOMATIC is critical; otherwise, you will forget. On-site is good (Time Machine), Off-site is better (CrashPlan)

Mac OS: Time Machine. (free)
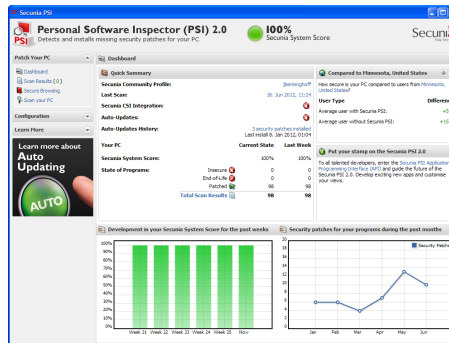Windows (and Mac OS, for offsite backup): CrashPlan. (free and not free, and they're local! Code 42)

The Precautions

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Mac OS, Windows: Turn on automatic (OS) updates.

ALSO: Turn on automatic updates wherever you can, and use Secunia Personal Software Inspector (Free) or MacUpdate (subscription) – to identify missing updates for other software you've installed.
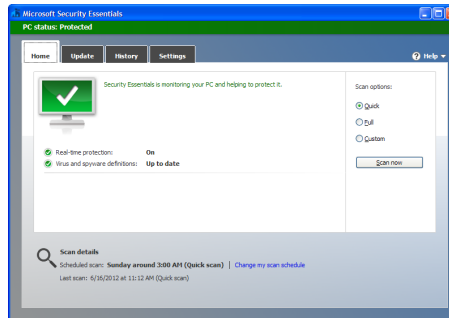
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AV: Essential if you have Windows. Just becoming necessary if you have Mac OS. Genuine Mac OS viruses are just becoming common enough to make Mac OS AV worthwhile. You don't and shouldn't have to pay for AV on either platform.

Windows: Microsoft Security Essentials. (Free)
Mac OS: Sophos. (Free version)

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Buy a Password Manager. Use it. Generate a random password for every website/service you use; that way, if one is compromised, the bad guys can't break into any of your other sites, and, it's easy to change your current password. Protect them with a pass PHRASE: a phrase or sentence that's easy to remember, but hard to guess.

1Password (Mac OS, Windows, iOS, Android) – not free, 1 time purchase, sync with Dropbox.
Lastpass.com (cloud-service, 2 factor option, yubikey) – free and subscription

Questions?

Thank You!

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