Frequently Asked Questions (FAQ) for Students

WELCOME

This document has been created to answer some basic computer-related questions you may have. Southern Careers Institute is happy to be able to offer some suggestions and recommendations on how to use and protect your computer. SCI accepts no responsibility for maintaining your system and offers these suggestions with no guarantee. However, these are the steps we follow at work and on our home systems.

Frequently Asked/Answered Questions

I just got my computer, what should I do now?

Congratulations! Ownership of a computer is a wonderful thing. However, you also have a responsibility to protect your investment from becoming damaged or infected with a virus. Most computers come with the basic applications. You should make sure that you also install applications such as a basic firewall, antivirus and bad software (malware). While SCI makes no guarantees and accepts no responsibility for the security and safety of your computer, we will make some suggestions.

What is a good antivirus software that I can get for free?

There are plenty of companies that make antivirus software, some paid and some free. A couple of good, free applications are AVG http://free.avg.com/us-en/free-antivirus-download and Avira http://www.avira.com/en/avira-free-antivirus.

What firewall should I use?

One of the more popular firewall applications, also free, is Zonealarm http://www.zonealarm.com/security/en-us/anti-virus-spyware-free-download.htm.

I keep getting lots of pop ups for ads and such when I am on the internet. What should I do?

Advertisers today use popup messages to try and get you to purchase their product. At the very least, these popups are nuisances. Most internet browsers today have Popup blockers included. If you go to www.google.com and do a search for "enable popup blocking" for your particular internet browser, Internet Explorer, Chrome, Firefox, etc. you will get some good instructions about how to turn on the pop blocker.

Popup browsers can also be an indicator that your computer has a virus. You should have installed an antivirus software application already. It is a good idea to perform a scan on your computer. You can also download and install another free application that will perform a good scan of your computer, to help compliment your other antivirus software. Go to http://www.malwarebytes.org/downloads/ and install the FREE application. Once it is installed, you can perform a thorough scan of the system. Once it is done, it will give you the opportunity to remove any bad files it finds.

What else can I do to make sure my computer doesn't get a virus?

Beyond using a firewall and antivirus software, the next best thing to do is to make sure that you install any Microsoft patches. These patches are designed to make sure the system is secure from known hacker issues. These patches come out monthly so you need to make sure that you stay current.

What is the best internet browser to use?

This is a personal choice that only the owner can make. The most common browsers are Internet Explorer, Chrome and Firefox. Each has god and each has bad. We recommend that you try each one to see which one you like best. They are all free.

I think my computer has a virus and I've tried everything but nothing works. What now?

If you have tried scanning with your antivirus and with Malwarebytes and you still have issues, then you will probably need to find a computer services company that can do more thorough work. Do make sure that you FIRST have a backup of all your files copied to a CD. Make sure all photos, movies, music, documents, etc. are backed up because you may need to reinstall the operating system and this will delete ALL data on the hard drive.

Are there any free alternatives to Office if I don't want to pay?

YES! The biggest competitor to Microsoft is a suite called LibreOffice. Originally created for LINUX, LibreOffice can now be installed onto Windows and has the ability to save the files in the format to be readable by Office. You can get it here: https://www.libreoffice.org/download/libreoffice-fresh/

My computer is running slow now. How can I speed it up again?

Over time you will install more and more applications. You will also delete files. All of this can lead to your computer running much slower than before. There are a couple of things that you can try doing. First, a computer hard drive will save files all over the disk. And while the disk is small, there are still mechanical parts that need to move. As you delete a file some space comes available so the next time you save something, part of that file may be in that location and may even be in tens or hundreds of locations. It takes time to put the file back together so you can access it. This is called Fragmentation. For this, there is a tool on your computer for defragmenting the disk, or reorganizing the disk so files are put together like a jig-saw puzzle. Go to START, PROGRAMS, ACCESSORIES, SYSTEM TOOLS and click on DISK DEFRAGMENTER. Click on this and when the application starts, click on DEFFRAGMENT DISK. This may take some time to complete.

The second thing you can do is to remove applications that you don't use. Go to START, CONTROL PANEL, PROGRAMS AND FEATURES. Find the application you don't need any longer. Highlight it and then click on the UNINSTALL button above the names of the applications.

My web page isn't showing the current information. What can I do?

All internet browsers maintain a cache of pages to help speed the loading of those pages. Unfortunately, sometimes the data has changed and you will see older page information. Since each browser is a little different, the best advice we can give is to go to a google page and search for something like "How do I clear the Internet Explorer Cache files?" You should be pretty successful with the results since that is a task many people search for.

None of the above answers my question. What do I do now?

If you still have unanswered questions, please contact your Student Services Advisor and they will either provide you with an answer or will contact the SCI IT Support for additional help.