

COMPUTER TROUBLESHOOTERS

Global NEWS

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**Computer
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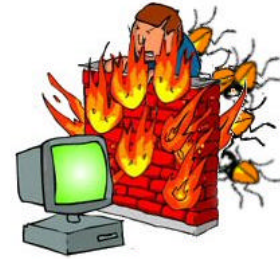
What’s this ‘firewall’ thing then?

A small application named a ‘firewall’ is being used more and more by us on all of our computers. ZoneAlarm, Norton Personal Firewall, even the new Windows XP Service Pack 2 includes a big firewall. This small program is very efficient but do we really know what it is or what it does? Do we really know what we are supposed to do with it? This program keeps us safe from some of the ‘nasties’ but along the way, it can be of an annoyance, but we don’t want to turn it off do we?

A firewall is a program that will block random hackers or anyone from accessing your computer via the internet when you don’t want them to. A firewall is very good at this job, but sometimes a little too good. When you run your email program for the first time, it will pop up and start asking you questions, what do you do with this? Do you allow it? How do you know that it is just your e-mail client that’s accessing the internet at this time? All these questions come up regularly while running a firewall.

To give you a basic idea of a firewall, we will first look at your programs. Every time you open your web browser you are using the internet, ‘uploading’ or sending information to others, and ‘download’ or collecting information from others. A firewall will look at this and ask you whether you want a specific program to upload or download. This can sometimes be extremely annoying, for example, if your child wants to play a certain game, and their firewall pops up asking you whether you want the game to access the internet. Do you allow it? What harm will it do to their PC?

Firewalls are very complex, but when set up correctly can be very easy to manage. Your



local Computer Troubleshooter is very experienced with these programs and can help you set them up for all of your needs. Once set up correctly, a firewall can be the ultimate, essential hacker manager, but you must remember that a firewall and a virus scanner are different, so you must run both!

So what do you do?

Now that you have your firewall on your computer, you can be assured that you will get messages from it. There are some things to do when this happens.
















The options you will get are:

- ? Allow Once
- ? Deny Once
- ? Allow Always
- ? Deny Always

If you can see the firewall is asking you about a program that you want to access the internet (e.g. Outlook, Internet Explorer), click Allow Always (in some firewalls, tick the box and select allow).

If you are unsure, the best thing to do is to Deny Once. This way, if it was a bad program trying to access, there’s no harm done. If it was a program you wanted to access the internet that stopped working, you may have to restart the program or even reboot the PC for the firewall to present the message again. If you are sure it’s a bad program, select Deny Always and it will never ask you again.

Your local Computer Troubleshooter is always available to help you with your firewall.

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