

TECHNOLOGY CORNER

Computer Safety 101

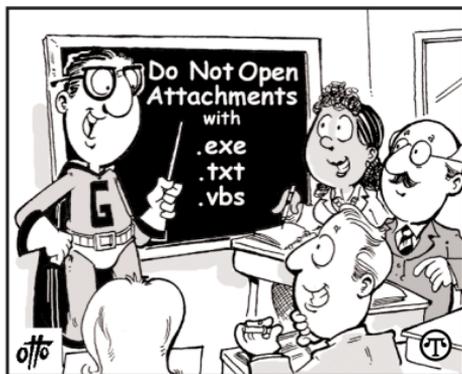
(NAPSA)—Whether you're a home user or a small-business owner, the more high tech you get, the more important it is to follow safe computing practices. Doing so can help protect your computer from viruses, worms and other computer woes. Try these tips:

- **What Not To Open**—Never open attachments that are “executable” programs (games, videos or screensavers) or that contain file extensions of .exe, .vbs, and .scr. Also, never open attachments that contain double file extensions (.txt.vbs for example). They could be viruses.

- **Installation**—Don't install pirated software onto your computer. Not only is it illegal, but the software often contains viruses as well.

- **Tech Support**—If your computer goes down, there are ways to get it up again quickly. For instance, Geeks On Call is a computer support company that trains its technicians in the technical aspects of servicing computers, as well as the finer points of customer service. The company's technicians are A+ certified, pass “Geek Tests” (rigorous exams on technology) and attend “Geek University”—a weeklong training program that emphasizes customer service. Small businesses—or home computer users—can call the support service and receive help the same day or the next day.

- **No Phishing**—Phishing scams are common e-mail tactics that



Geek Speak—Computer users should never open files with attachments that have double file extensions such as .txt.vbs.

attempt to lure recipients into divulging personal information or downloading worms and Trojan horses—programs that allow a computer to be hijacked. Some scams even masquerade as security updates from Microsoft. Be certain to only download files from secure and trusted sources and do not share personal information with unknown companies over the Web.

- **File Sharing**—If you file share, be sure you know exactly what is being copied onto your computer. Sometimes, even legally shared files contain viruses or Trojan horses.

- **Back It Up**—As a precaution, back up all important files on your computer. That can help keep valuable data safe from hackers and viruses.

For more information, visit www.geeksoncall.com.