

COMPUTER

NEWS AND NOTES

Protecting Your Data From Digital Dangers

(NAPSA)—Viruses, spyware, hackers, data loss or theft—these are a few of the digital dangers a computer faces. Fortunately, there are some easy ways to protect hardware and your irreplaceable files. An important first step in data

protection involves updating Windows with the newest security patches and service packs. You can do that by enabling the automatic update feature on Windows XP or manually downloading the patches from <http://windowsupdate.microsoft.com>.

Other ways to safeguard Windows XP are described in easy-to-understand language in a new book called “Geeks On Call Windows XP: 5-Minute Fixes” (Wiley, \$14.95). The book also offers expert advice and step-by-step explanations of topics ranging from avoiding digital dangers to turbocharging Windows. Here are some additional tips from the book that can help you protect your data.

Backing Up Data

Protect hard drive data by backing it up on recordable or rewritable CDs/DVDs or separate hard drives. You can also use special software to create a “disc image” of your hard drive. If your hard drive ever crashes, you can simply load the disc image onto your computer, and you will be up and running as if nothing ever happened. Popular disc-imaging programs include Norton Ghost, Acronis True Image, NTI Backup NOW, and Turbo Backup.



There are a few quick ways people can protect their computers' data.

Protecting Important Files

If you don't want to back up your entire hard drive, consider backing up your most important documents (financial information, digital photos, music files, etc.). Popular programs used for document backups include Nero Burning ROM, Nero Express, NTI CD-Maker, and Roxio Easy Media Creator. Also, be sure to protect all your data by using a password on your Windows account.

Know The Enemy

The most common reasons for data loss include:

- Dead hard drives—Hard drives can give out. It pays to be prepared.
- Viruses—Some digital threats lurking on the Internet can destroy certain files on your computer.
- Power surges—An electrical storm or fluctuation in power lines can cause a sudden burst of electricity that zaps your hard drive.
- Theft—Computers, especially laptops, are big targets for thieves.

For more information, visit www.geeksoncall.com.