

Advanced Windows XP

Lesson 2

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Lesson 2 — Security, Internet and Email

Introduction

The main thrust of this lesson is to make sure that your computer is, and will remain, protected from a variety of security threats. Nearly all of these threats come through your connection to the Internet and Email.

Windows XP with Service Pack 2 (SP2) installed has many new security features, and you are urged to use them all as well as other protective programs such as anti-virus, anti-spyware and anti-adware. These protective features are essential when you are surfing the Internet or using your Email. In addition, Microsoft will automatically download and install updates to Windows XP, Internet Explorer and Outlook Express to keep your computer up to date and plug any security “holes” that crop up. This lesson will cover essential security features of XP, Internet Explorer and the email program Outlook Express.

Firewall and Other Security Measures

Firewalls

When your computer is on the Internet (through a dial-up or broadband connection) it is subject to intrusions from clever computer programmers (otherwise know as hackers). Without getting into the technical details, just be aware that hackers occasionally find your computer’s Internet address (see the Appendix for details) and come up with a way to probe your computer and sometimes even manage to download malicious software into it without your knowledge. This is rare and somewhat unlikely to happen, but it is prudent to be protected with a **firewall** — a software program that protects against such intrusions. Windows XP with Service Pack 2 has a built-in firewall that you can use by simply turning it on as will be covered in Exercise 2 below.

Anti-Virus Software

Computer virus’s are malicious software programs that can be very harmful to your computer. They are nearly always introduced to your computer in one of two ways: (1) you open an attachment to an email, or (2) you download and run (install) a program from the Internet. You will not know that the virus has come along with the attachment or program. You should be sure that you have an anti-virus program installed and running on your computer. Some leading anti-virus programs are:

- Norton Anti-Virus (by Symantec Corp.)
- MacAfee Anti-Virus
- AVG AntiVirus (by Grisoft Corp.)

Some of these programs include firewall and other security provisions. Of the three mentioned above, AVG is a free program that may be downloaded and installed on your computer. It not only checks your computer files for virus infections, but it also checks both incoming and outgoing emails. All of the above programs have automatic update features that will keep your anti-virus program current and protective against all the latest virus attacks. It is highly recommended that you install one of these programs and turn on the auto-update feature.

Anti-Spyware/Adware Programs

Another form of **malware** that generally is not really harmful to your computer is termed **spyware** or **adware**. These small computer programs usually get installed from places you go on the Internet, or they come along with files that you download such as music or videos. These programs can monitor your use of the Internet and report back to their originators the web pages that you access. Then these companies can target their marketing efforts to products that you are supposedly interested in. There are several free programs that you may download and install to detect and delete such malware.

- Windows Defender (by Microsoft Corp.)
- SpyBot Search and Destroy (by Safer Network Limited)
- Ad-Aware SE Personal (by Lavasoft)

It is recommended that, as a minimum, you install the Microsoft version.

Internet Explorer

An Internet Web Browser is a computer program (application) residing on your computer that you use to access (browse) the Internet either over your phone line (dial-up) or perhaps through a high speed connection (DSL or Cable). The most prolific browser program is Microsoft's Internet Explorer (IE) because it comes along as part of Microsoft's Windows operating system software. There are other popular browsers such as Firefox, Netscape, Opera and perhaps more,

but IE outnumbers them all. SP2 installs the latest version (V 6) of Internet Explorer and the email program Outlook Express.

Printing from Internet Explorer

The Print button on the IE toolbar will print the entire present web page. It prints everything in color, and it may print way more than you want if the web page is long (and some of them can run many pages). A better option is to go to the Menu Bar, click on File and then click on Print in the drop-down menu (or use the keyboard shortcut Ctrl-P). This opens a dialog box that allows you to print all pages or just certain ones. In addition, if you only want to print a certain part of a page, then first highlight the part you want by, say, dragging the mouse over it to turn it blue. Then go to File | Print and click on Selection. It will only print the selected material. This can often save a lot of paper and ink.

New Browser Page

Once in a while a hyperlink will open a page in a new (second) browser window. This may happen so fast that you don't notice it, but you can tell if this happens because:

1. The Back button is greyed out, and
2. You will see two browser tasks running down on the Task Bar.
(Remember, Windows is a multi-tasking operating system.)

Unless you notice the above two indications, you will probably be unaware that this has happened. To close this second task and return to your original page, simply click on the X in the upper right corner of the browser window. The new task will close and you will see your old task — the original browser window. Alternatively, to keep the second task going, but return to your original one, click on the original task on the task bar. You can switch between tasks by clicking on them on the task bar. The currently active task will appear dark blue, and the inactive task(s) will be a lighter blue.

Email

You access email through a computer program called an ***Email Handler***. This program may reside on your home computer (for example, Outlook Express). Alternately, you may be using a handler on a remote computer connected to your computer over the Internet (often termed "webmail"). These lessons will

discuss Outlook Express (OE). The many webmail handlers all operate in a similar manner, but will not be addressed here.

Each email user has to have a unique email address. These addresses have a very distinct format consisting of three parts: the person's **user identification (user ID)** followed by the "at" sign (@) followed by their email ISP's address — often referred to as the **domain**. No spaces are allowed in email addresses and they must be exact — computers are really very dumb and they don't understand small mistakes in an email address. Here are some typical email addresses:

sally_communicator@hotmail.com (notice use of an underscore instead of a space in the user ID)

benjamin32@cox.net

Email addresses often use the person's name or initials, and they sometimes include numbers or other characters to make them unique because no two email addresses can be the same — that would really confuse the computers. Email addresses are generally not case sensitive, but in some cases the user ID portion is. So, it is best to use the upper and lower case letters as they are given to you. The domain portion is not case sensitive.

Attachments

You will find that people often attach files such as pictures to their emails, and all you have to do to open the file is double click on it. However, it is good policy not to open such attachments unless they have come from a trusted source, as they might come with a virus attached. Check the file name and especially the file extension (the three letters after the period in the file name). Names such as Vacation.jpg or Jane.bmp are picture files and are generally safe. However, files with the extension .exe or .scr are computer programs. Once open they have control of your computer, so only open these if you absolutely trust their source.

Spam

Spam is a slang term for unsolicited commercial email (UCE). Most ISP's now have spam filters in place that attempt to block spam from your email account, but some usually slips through because spammers are very clever at hiding their identity. Your first clue to a spam message is that you don't recognize the sender. Just highlight and delete all such messages.

Phishing Emails

Below is the text of a typical “Phishing” message that is attempting to steal account information.

Account Confirmation Required!

Dear Valued **RegionsNet®** Client,

Recently there have been a large number of identity theft attempts targeting RegionsNet customers. In order to safeguard your account we require that you confirm your banking details. This process is mandatory.

You may do so by clicking Here and submitting the required information.

Failure to do so may result in a temporary cessation of your account services pending submission. Thank you for your prompt attention to this matter and your co-operation in helping us maintain the integrity of our customers accounts.

Please do not reply to this e-mail, as this is an unmonitored alias. If you require further assistance refer to our support centre.

RegionsNet respects your privacy. Click here to read the RegionsNet Group Privacy Policy Statement.

Electronic Banking services are issued by the RegionsNet of United States (Electronic Banking services include telephone banking, Netbank and Bpay). A Product Disclosure Statement (PDS) is available for these products on this website or from any branch of the RegionsNet.

Regions' Customer Service Center: (800) Regions (734-4667) or (800) 483-9393 (For customer in Florida, Georgia and South Carolina)

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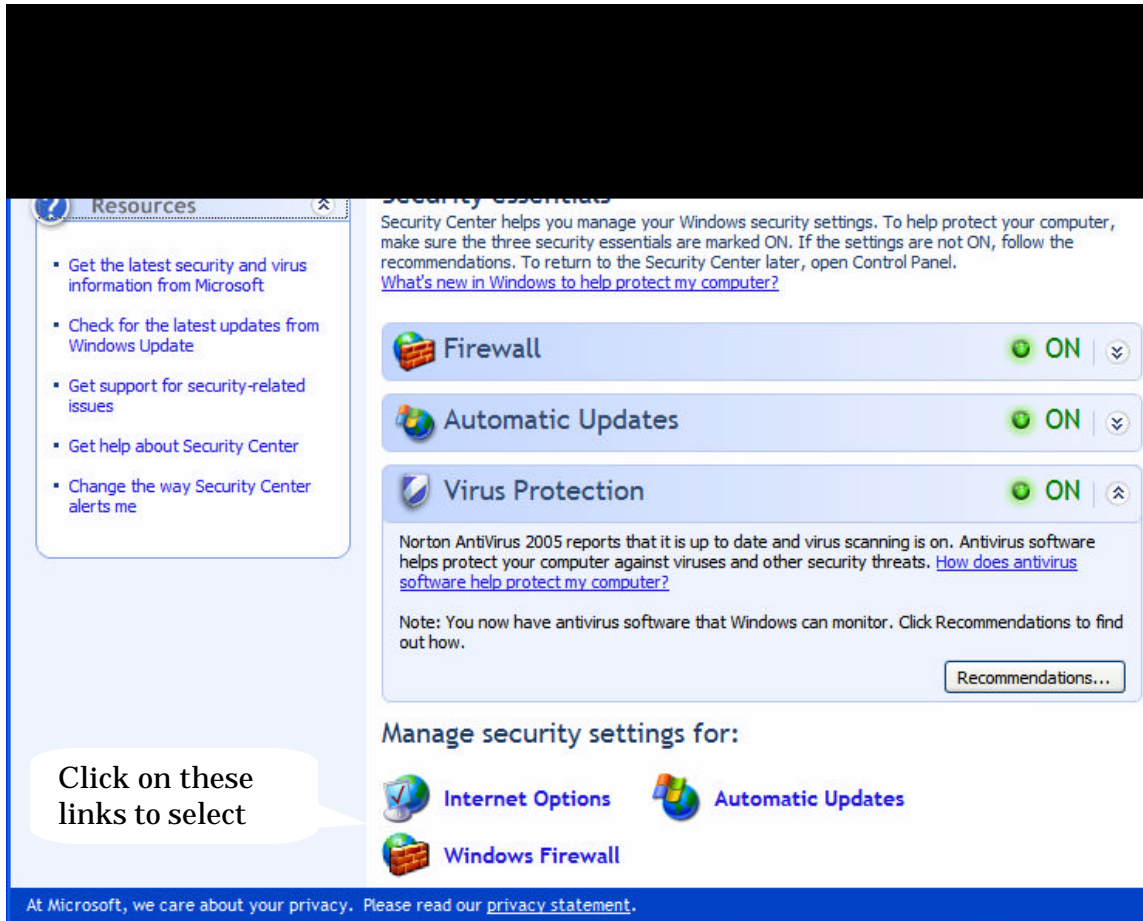
If you click on “Click Here” it will open up a web page that may look exactly like your bank or financial institution — but it will be a fake that asks for your account and social security numbers. Don’t click! DELETE it!

Exercise 2 — Security, Internet and Email

Security Features

Click on Start, Control Panel, and select Security Center. It is highly recommended that you turn all security features ON. (Of course, you will have to have an anti-virus program installed and running for virus protection.) Refer

to the figure below and, if necessary, click on Windows Firewall (near the bottom of the window) and select the ON option. (You can explore further options at your leisure if, for example, you are using a laptop computer away from home.) Close the Windows Firewall window.



Click on Automatic Updates and select either Automatic, Download ..., or Notify If you select Automatic you can then specify the time and day for the download, and the computer will do this automatically. However, if you are on a slow dial-up connection when the download starts and you are using your computer, you may find that it slows your computer down to a crawl. Thus, you may want to select the “Notify me ...” and thereby control when the download occurs.

Click on Internet Options for access to Internet Security settings. It is recommended that you use the Default Level. If curious you can click on Custom Level to explore the many selectable security features, but they are generally too technical to discuss here.

Click on the Privacy tab and make sure that “Block pop-ups” is checked. This eliminates most annoying pop-up windows that occur when surfing the Internet. You can also use the slider to set the level of privacy that you want. “Medium” is recommended. Refer to the appendix for a discussion of cookies.

Internet

You are probably familiar with “surfing” the Internet and basic operations of an Internet browser program. This exercise will address some of the more subtle points.

Setting Up Your Home Page

Go the page you wish to use as your Home page. Click on Tools | Internet Options | Use Current. Your browser will now return to this page every time you start or click on Home.

The Links Toolbar

Use the Links toolbar to quickly get to your most used web pages. If the links toolbar is not visible, then click on View, Toolbars. If there is no check mark next to Links then click to turn the Links on. If you still can't see the links toolbar, look at the extreme right end of the toolbar area and verify that the word “Links” is there. If so, go to View, Toolbars again and make sure that Lock the Toolbars is unchecked. Move the mouse over the vertical dotted bar just to the left edge of the word Links. Hold the left button down and drag the Links toolbar down and to the left edge of the toolbar area. Return to View, Toolbars and click on Lock the Toolbars. This prevents you from inadvertently moving the toolbars around.

To customize the Links toolbar click on Favorites and open the Links folder. Delete any unwanted links. Go to your most favorite web pages and while there click on Favorites and insert that hyperlink into the Links folder. Change any suggested long link names to short ones. That way you can put many more links on the toolbar.

Full Screen View

Press the F11 key and your web page will fill the screen. Press it again to return. The full screen view may come up with a standard toolbar across the top. Right-click in the blank toolbar area and select Auto Hide. The toolbar will

disappear. Move the mouse pointer up to the top and it will reappear as long as the mouse pointer is in the toolbar area.

Email

Outlook Express (OE) comes with Windows XP and is a local email handler program. In this advanced course we assume that you already know most basic email functions such as opening emails, composing and sending new messages, replying and forwarding emails, and using the Address Book. If you need help in these areas the instructor will give you a brief introduction. The following exercises cover security and introduce you to some of the less obvious features of Outlook Express.

As with most programs OE can be configured in a multitude of ways to suit the user. In this exercise we will recommend a configuration that works well for most users and we'll demonstrate some security precautions. You may want to use these options on your home computer.

Email Layout and Options

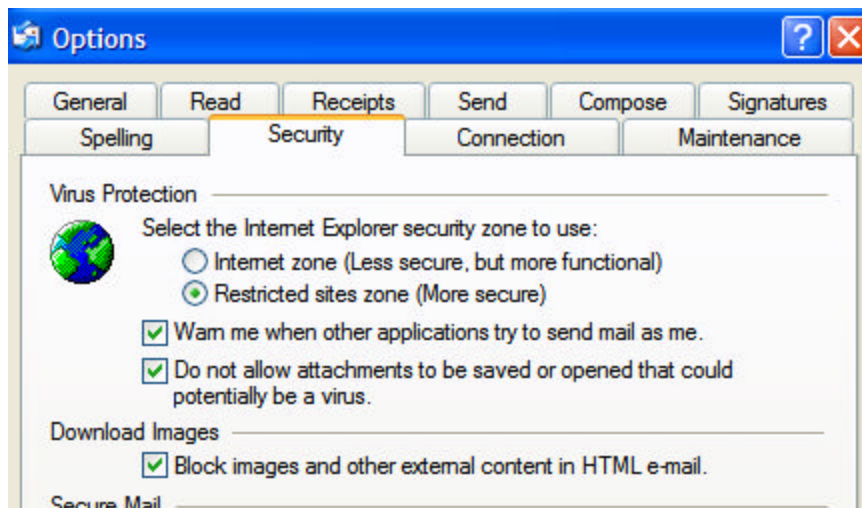
Open Outlook Express. At the Menu Bar click on View and select Layout. Verify that the following boxes are checked: Contacts, Folder Bar, Folder List, Status Bar, and Toolbar. Uncheck the Outlook Bar, Views Bar and Show Preview Pane. Close the View Layout Properties dialog box.

Click on Tools | Options. On the General tab check the "When starting, go directly ..." box. Uncheck the Notify regarding newsgroups box unless you plan to use newsgroups (a subject not covered here). Click on the Read tab and in the Reading Messages area uncheck all the boxes except the first and last. Click on the Send tab and check all the boxes except "Send messages immediately" and "Automatically put people in my Address book." Be sure HTML is selected in the sending format area. To change the font in your outgoing messages click on the Compose tab, select Font Settings and set up the font for your messages. Click on the Maintenance tab and check the "Empty messages" box.

Email Security

For the greatest protection click on the Security tab and use the illustrated settings. However, you may find some these are too restrictive. For instance, pictures and attachments from trusted sources may be blocked. In that case you need to select the less secure Internet zone and uncheck the "Do not allow

attachments ...” box. If you have a good anti-virus program running, these less restrictive settings will serve you well, and they won't block useful information. The above settings are recommended, but you can change any of them to suit your own purposes. When through, close the Options window.

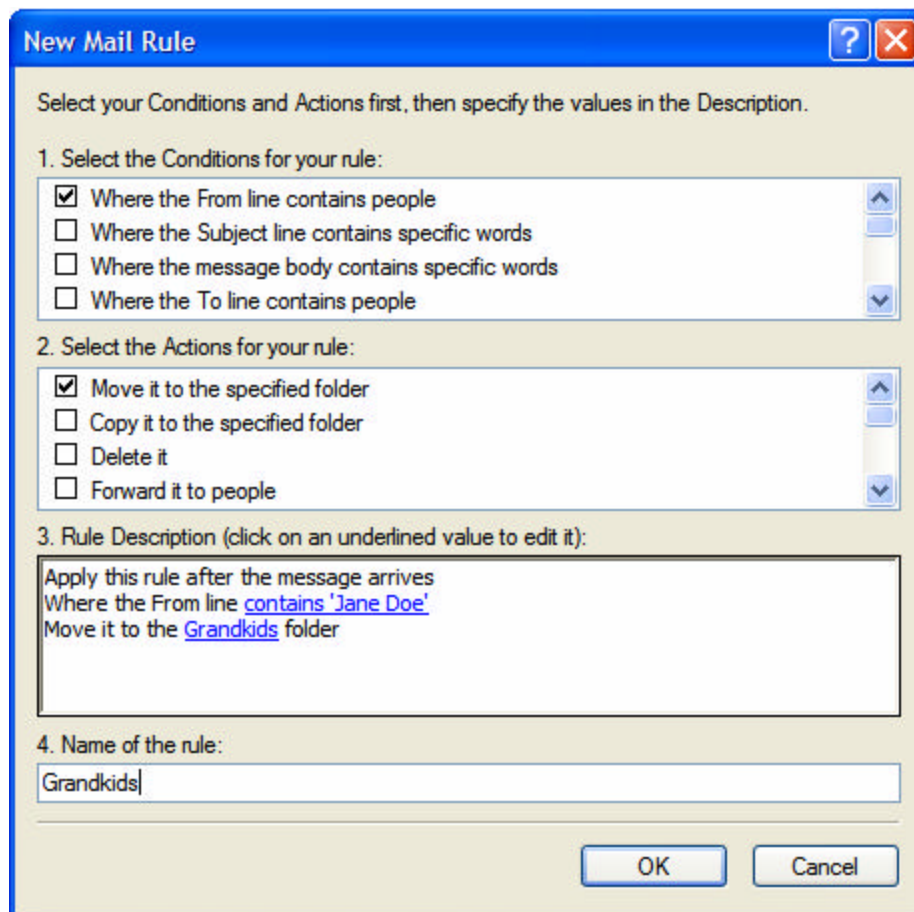


Custom Folders and Email Rules

Would you like to keep emails from your grandkids organized in one place? Here's how.

In the Folders pane of Outlook Express right-click on Local Folders and select New Folder. When the New Folder window opens type "Grandkids" in the Name box and click OK.

Click on Tools, Message Rules and select Mail. This opens the New Message Rule window. Check the "Where the From line contains people" in area 1. In area 3 click on the words contains people. A "Select



People” window will open allowing you to select names from your address book. (In this example enter Jane Doe and click on Add. On your home computer click Address book and select a name(s) from it).

Next, check the box in area 2 labeled “Move it to the specified folder.” Again, in area 3 click on the word “specified.” This opens up the “Move” window. Select the “Grandkids” folder. In area 4 enter the name “Grandkids.”

When finished the window should look like the above example. Click OK to return to the Inbox. From now on, all messages received from Jane Doe will be routed directly to the Grandkids folder.

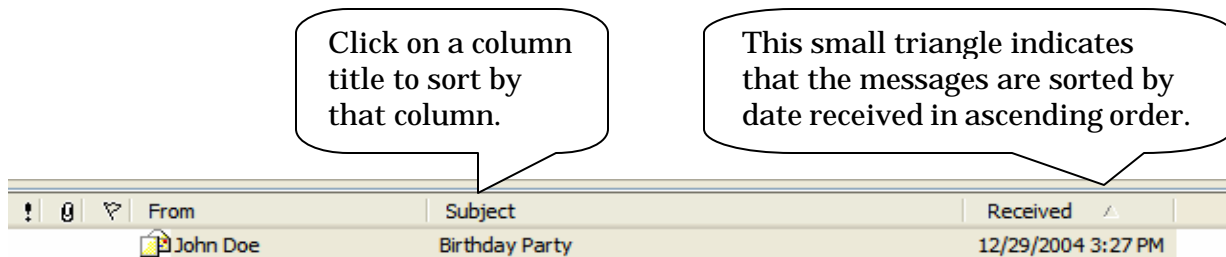
Similar options are available to automatically copy, delete and forward messages depending on message contents.

Blocked Senders List

To route all messages from a certain sender directly to the Deleted Items folder, select Tools, Message Rules, Blocked Senders List Click on Add and enter the email address of the sender. Click on OK to close the window.

Sorting Messages

You can easily change the order of messages in the Inbox, Sent Items, Deleted Items or any other folder. Just click on the column title as illustrated below.



When you click on any column title the list will be sorted by that factor and the small triangle will appear next to the title. To invert the sort order click on the column title again and the triangle will reverse. Thus, if the list is sorted by Subject in A to Z order, clicking on Subject again will display it in Z to A order.

Contact List

The contact pane in the lower left corner of the OE main window lists all the names in your address book. Double click on a name in the contact list to open up a new message to that person.

Problem: Window Too Small

It is quite common that when you go to read or compose a message it opens up in a small window. You then go to the upper right corner and click on the “maximize” button to have it fill the screen. But the next time you open one it starts out with the small window again. Here’s the fix.

1. Do NOT click on Maximize.
2. With the smaller window drag the corner(s) until it just about fills the screen (or is big enough to suit you). Click on File and then on Close.

Re-open the window and it will remain the size you selected.

Problem: The Send Button Disappeared

In this case, not only is the Send button missing, but the entire Toolbar is gone! Here’s the fix, either:

1. Click on View, then on Layout, and check the box labeled “Toolbar”, OR
2. Right-click in the Menu/Toolbar area at the top of the screen. A small window should pop up with two options: Toolbar and Views Bar. The Toolbar won’t have a check mark next to it, so click on it to restore the Toolbar.

Notice that item 1 above works to restore other features such as the Folder List, Contacts List, etc. Just make sure the appropriate boxes are checked.

Appendix

Internet Protocol Addresses

When your computer is connected to the Internet it is automatically given an **Internet Protocol** (IP) address and it then becomes part of the Internet. Any computer anywhere on the internet can “talk” to your computer if it knows your IP address (and there are many ways that your IP address can be detected). For example, when you use your Internet browser program to go to a particular place on the Internet such as www.microsoft.com, a master computer somewhere on the Internet translates the www... address into its numerical IP address which has the form `nnn.nnn.nnn.nnn` where `nnn` are numbers such as 1 or 23 or 456. For example the above Microsoft IP address is 207.48.199.30, and the Internet’s computers all use the IP addresses to make their connections.

When you go to Microsoft’s site, your computer also sends your IP address to Microsoft’s server computer. It, in turn, sends the web page you requested back to your address. Microsoft’s IP address is fixed, but in most cases your ISP will assign you a **dynamic** IP address, i.e. the address will change each time you connect to your ISP.

Cookies

Cookies are small files stored on your computer and sent by web pages you have visited. They contain information about your last visit. The next time you access a web page it can read the cookie. What’s in a cookie? — Only information that you provide to the web page server. As a minimum a cookie can contain your computer’s IP address and a code indicating what web browser program you are using. Thus, the web page server would know to use the correct codes for your browser program. Other information that you provide could be stored there for convenience. For example, if a web page allows you to create and a password for access, the password could be saved in a cookie so that you need not enter the password every time you connect to that page. Cookies usually have expiration dates, so they will automatically disappear sometime in the future.