

## **CNS eZine: PC Security Tips and Tricks** April 2003 Rev. Oct 2004

**Kill those Popup Ads!** If you spend any time online at commercial internet sites, you're bound to be sick and tired of pop up advertisements. Not only do these ads annoy you, but they also rob you of the bandwidth you're paying for. Even today, more than 80% of internet access is still 56kb or less, so eliminating those popup ads can return some of your bandwidth to use for what you want. Try <http://download.com.com/3000-2381-7903554.html> for free. Some sites you visit will need to open a new window, all you have to do is click on the icon to turn the Popup Killer on and off. If a link doesn't respond with the Popup Killer on, click it off, then try the link again.

**Time to upgrade your pc?** When you donate or pass your out-dated computer on to its next user, or even if you throw it away, I strongly recommend erasing your hard drive. Merely booting in DOS and deleting the files won't cut it. All that really does is remove the reference to the file in the FAT (file attributes table). The files are still there and can easily be recovered. To clean the drive properly, try this file: <http://www.tolvanen.com/eraser/>.

**Protect your Confidential Information!** You'd be surprised, just as I was, how many cookies you accumulate on your hard drive, and how much personal information you'd find if you analyzed the files. Spyware, a term for files that keep track of your surfing habits, personal information, credit card numbers, etc. is on your pc if you've ever entered them into a web site. Even if you regularly clean your temp folders, history, and trash folders, you'd be surprised to find what might even be in your registry. I don't advise editing your registry unless you are an expert, but I did find an easy to use utility file that will scan your system for you, and mark the entries that are suspect. You can download it for free at [http://www.pcworld.com/downloads/file\\_download/0,fd,7423,fileidx,1,00.asp](http://www.pcworld.com/downloads/file_download/0,fd,7423,fileidx,1,00.asp)

**Tune Up your Computer:** Ever wonder what you should be doing on a weekly and monthly basis to keep your PC in tune? Just like your car, it does require some periodic preventative maintenance. Download our free file for a guide on keeping your PC in top-notch shape at <http://www.CompetitiveNetworkSolutions.com>

**Instant Messenger security risk** If you are one of the millions of users of Instant Messenger, whether it is AOL, Yahoo, MSN, or some other service, there are some options you should change in your software (from the default values) to protect yourself from risk. No matter which service you use, you should disable "receive file transfers." If you actually need to receive files, have them sent as a regular email attachment. Your antivirus software will scan the attachment for you, whereas it would not on a direct file transfer using instant messenger. Also check your privacy options to ensure they meet your needs. Lastly, check these settings for each screen name you use, as each screen name carries its own set of preferences.

**Infections:** Adware, Spyware, Viruses, Worms, and Trojans are the biggest cause of computing slowdowns, as well as wasted network access. Further, the risk of having your personal information compromised grows greater with each day. Regular cleaning of your pc is the only way to thwart giving up computing resources and your personal information. XP SP2 does a "better" job of protection, but not complete. See our PC Security page at [www.competitivenetworksolutions.com](http://www.competitivenetworksolutions.com) for instructions.