

## Computer Protection for Business Owners

### A Business Continuity Toolkit

**Nicholson Solutions** offer a range of training, consultancy and software development services for businesses and individuals, including both one-to-one and classroom-based training, tailored to your requirements and budget.

We work with all ability levels from absolute beginners to competent users with specific requirements, with the aim of making the most of your existing equipment and software.

[www.nicholson solutions.co.uk](http://www.nicholson solutions.co.uk)

### Introduction

This leaflet is for anyone who manages their own business computers. It aims to help you protect yourself from loss of business owing to computer trouble.

Nicholson Solutions are a computer training company who also provide computer support for small businesses. It is our experience in helping businesses to protect their systems and their data that led us to develop the Business Continuity checklist which is provided in this book.

This leaflet aims to explain as simply and briefly as possible the importance of protecting your business from computer viruses, internet intruder attacks and computer hardware failure. It explains how to go about getting protection and how to maintain it.

Having established what we considered to be the best tools for the job, we became resellers for AVG anti-virus and firewall, and for the Clunk Click backup service. So if you want to act on what you read, we will be delighted to help. You will find all our contact details on [www.nicholson solutions.co.uk](http://www.nicholson solutions.co.uk).

## Nicholson Solutions' Top Tips for remaining virus free

- Do not open unsolicited email.
- In particular do not open attachments or follow hyperlinks (links to web-addresses) in unsolicited email.
- Keep your anti-virus product updated regularly (at least once a week).
- Ensure your anti-virus product will prompt you if it has been unable to update for a week.
- Take regular backups of your data, including your email. This is an essential part of virus protection (see Backups section).
- Buy your software from reputable sources.

### Case Study 1

Pat rang us because they were having trouble with their internet connection. They had no virus protection in place, so before doing anything else we ran a clean-up and found 88 infected items. There was no need for further action, because once the computer was cleaned up the internet connection worked perfectly. They now run AVG anti-virus.

### Case Study 2

James rang us to ask for help because he couldn't understand why his hard

## Anti-virus software

### What is it?

Viruses are self-propagating computer programs, which are generally malicious in nature. They can be spread by email and by removable storage media like memory sticks and CDs. The more general collective term for malicious software is "malware", since this can include viruses, spyware, Trojans and worms, all of which are likely to cause harm to your computer, or to expose you to risk of having your personal details stolen.

**Anti-virus software** provides you with a means of automatically checking all incoming emails and any CDs or DVDs which are inserted into your computer. It does this by installing an engine which understands how viruses work, and a means of refuelling it with up-to-date virus definitions on a regular basis.

### Why do I need it?

Viruses can cause a huge variety of ill-effects on your computer, some of the most common being loss of performance and automatic emailing of everyone in your email address book (this can cause mail servers to fail under a huge load of automatically generated emails).

If you connect on-line without having virus protection in place, your computer **will** get infected, possibly within seconds. The cure may involve re-installing everything on your computer from scratch. If you don't have backups of your data you may lose everything (see Backups section).

### What should I do?

Purchase an anti-virus product, install it, and keep it up-to-date. You should be updating its virus definitions once a week as a minimum. Most anti-virus products will update automatically when they detect that you are connected on-line, but you should ensure that it will alert you if it has not updated within the last week.

Nicholson Solutions' recommendation is AVG from Grisoft ([www.grisoft.com](http://www.grisoft.com)). We have found it the most effective at virus removal, and it has less effect on your computer performance than some products. It is competitively priced and not as invasive as some competitors. It is also available with an integrated firewall (see below).

### What now?

If having installed your anti-virus product, you get an alert telling you that a virus has been detected, this is not a cause for panic. If your anti-virus product is telling you about it, then it is protecting you from it. It will prompt you to repair the infected item, or delete it. Especially if the item is an email, deleting it is the best option. If it is a genuine email (not spam) you should tell the sender that they have a virus (you'd want to know, wouldn't you?).

Your anti-virus product will have a facility for scanning your whole computer hard disk to check for viruses. You should do this periodically. You do not need to be connected on-line for this, and you should do it at a time when you do not need to use your computer, as it will affect

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disk seemed to be very full. It was so full that he was having difficulty uninstalling software to free space. His computer was infected with a virus which duplicated files over and over until the computer could not function. His computer had to be cleaned out and reinstalled from scratch. He had no anti-virus software in place and there were hundreds of infected items on his disk.

performance and may take an hour or more.

It is still possible that you will be unlucky enough to be attacked by a new virus before your anti-virus software has a solution for it. To protect yourself against this you must have up-to-date backups of your data, see Backups section.

## Nicholson Solutions' Top Tips for intrusion protection

- If you want to use the Windows XP firewall, install Service Pack 2.
- If you have Service Pack 2 installed, but are purchasing a separate firewall product, ensure the Windows firewall is turned off to avoid conflict.

### Case Study 1

Robert's system was infected by the Slammer virus, which gets into the computer directly through your Internet connection. This was surprising because he thought his dial-up connection would be less vulnerable than broadband.

After he had disinfected the virus and installed a personal firewall he noticed that only a few seconds after connecting somebody probed his computer. Now if he can't connect through a hardware router he makes sure that he always has a personal firewall turned on.

## Firewall software

### *What is it?*

A firewall protects your computer against intruders coming via the internet. It prevents your computer being seen by other computers on the internet and allows you to control who (or what programs) have access to your computer. You may have a hardware firewall if you connect to the internet via a router. A software firewall will give you control over both who connects in to your computer, and what programs connect out from your computer.

### *Why do I need it?*

Without a firewall, your computer is visible to others when you connect on-line. You will have an open door policy to anyone out there who wants to access computers for malicious purposes. If your computer is infected by spyware, it may gather information which you enter on-line and send it somewhere without you knowing it. If you have outgoing protection from a firewall, you will be asked whether you want to allow this program to connect out. If you don't recognise it, don't allow it.

### *What should I do?*

Purchase a firewall product, install it, and keep it up-to-date. You should update its security definitions once a week as a minimum. Most firewall products will update automatically when they detect that you are connected on-line, but you should check that it will alert you if it has not updated within the last week.

The easiest firewall products are those which are integrated with anti-virus software, so that both products update at the same time. Nicholson Solutions' recommendation is AVG from Grisoft ([www.grisoft.com](http://www.grisoft.com)). It comes integrated with the anti-virus product recommended above. If you run Windows XP you also have the option of a built-in firewall (providing incoming protection only). To use this, you should ensure that you have installed Windows XP Service Pack 2 (available in the automatic Windows updates).

### *What now?*

Once you have a firewall product in place, it may provide information on the number of intrusion attempts it has blocked, and you may be prompted to allow or disallow certain programs to connect.

If the firewall software recognises the program it will recommend that you allow it. If it does not recognise the program which is trying to connect it will recommend that you block it. It may be that you know the program, e.g. something new you have just purchased is taking you through on-line registration, in which case you can decide to allow it. If you don't know the identity of the program which is trying to connect, you could search for its name on the internet to gain information, but if you have any doubts you should block it, and perform a full disk scan with your anti-virus software in case your computer has been infected with some malicious software.

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## Nicholson Solutions' Top Tips for backup protection

- Do it regularly!
- Consider the cost to your business of losing one week's documents, emails, database entries and spreadsheets. Does it make you cringe? Consider backing up daily. Clunk Click makes this easy.
- Find the easiest method possible, so that it is never too much effort to backup. That is why we use Clunk Click.

### Case Study 1

Maria had to work her way round her business associates asking them all to provide up-to-date contact information, because she had lost her whole email address book through a virus attack. She was embarrassed because this did not show her in a good light, but she could not get back to normal business without the information.

### Case Study 2

Jane rang us to ask what "Disk read error" meant. Her hard disk had failed. Their insurance policy covered getting a new disk installed, and the computer put back to factory settings. They re-installed their software, then connected to Clunk Click and retrieved their data.

## Backups

### *What is it?*

A backup is a copy of the information stored on your computer, which is kept separately from your computer, generally on removable media like CD or removable disk. The aim is to protect you from loss of data due to hardware failure, virus attack, fire or flood. In order to do this the copy must be

- up-to-date
- comprehensive in scope
- stored remotely from your computer.

### *Why do I need them?*

You need backups so that you are equipped when any of the following disasters strikes:

- Your computer hard disk fails
- You suffer a serious virus attack
- Your office burns down
- Your computer is stolen

If you are equipped with a full and up-to-date backup, then when you have another computer available, or when you have a new hard disk installed, you will be able to restore your data from your backup and get back to business.

### *What should I do?*

The two most common reasons we find that clients have for not backing up are

- not being aware of the risk to their business
- underestimating the time since their last backup (i.e. not having a regular discipline of backing up).

Nicholson Solutions' recommendation is to use the Clunk Click on-line backup service. This involves paying a monthly fee (per GB of storage required) and installing a software client. The software uses your internet connection to connect to a remote data centre, and send the files you nominate, in encrypted form, to this secure centre, which is also mirrored (copied) at another data centre for extra protection. Once you have backed up all your files once, then only files which have changed and new files are backed up each day. This backup method involves so little intervention from the user that it overcomes all the barriers to backing up and provides solid, easily retrieved, off-site backup for your data.

### *What now?*

Once you have a regular method of backing up, you can make use of it any time, for example when you overwrite a document accidentally, or want to look back at an earlier version of something. You should in any case test your backup method now and again, to ensure you can retrieve files as you need. Use it when you get a new computer to assist with copying your data to the new hard disk.

For further advice on any of these topics, or to try AVG or Clunk Click backup free of charge, contact Nicholson Solutions at [info@nicholsonssolutions.co.uk](mailto:info@nicholsonssolutions.co.uk), or visit [www.nicholsonssolutions.co.uk](http://www.nicholsonssolutions.co.uk)

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Organisation			
Completed by		Date	

Complete the following details to assist you in the event that you need to reinstall your computer, for example, following a hard disk failure.

File this information carefully on hard-copy so that it is available when your computer is not, and file it securely since it contains your security information.

<b>1 Operating System</b>	<b>Location of CDs or documents or Web-address for software</b>
I have a recovery CD for my computer which will reinstall my current version of Windows <b>OR</b>	
I have a support contract or warranty which means my computer will be restored to its original state <b>OR</b>	
I have an alternative computer available, and could restore my data to it	
<b>2 Applications</b>	
I have CDs for the programs I need to install (e.g. anti-virus, broadband connection, Microsoft Office)	
The programs I normally download from the internet are: (e.g. Clunk Click, anti-virus)	
<b>3 Broadband</b>	
I have the CD safely stored and have the Product Key noted	
Username	
Password	
<b>4 Email</b>	
<b>4.1 I access my email on the web</b>	
Web address	
Username	
Password	
<b>4.2 I access my email using Outlook Express</b>	
My Outlook Express folders are included in my backup	
Email account details:	
User name	
Password	
Incoming mail server	
Outgoing mail server	
Phone number to dial if on dial-up connection	
<b>4.3 I access my email using Outlook</b>	
My Outlook PST file is included in my backup	
<b>Email account details:</b>	
User name	

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Password	
Incoming mail server	
Outgoing mail server	
Phone number to dial if on dial-up connection	
<b>4.4 Other email accounts</b>	
<b>Email account details (2)</b>	
User Name	
Password	
Incoming mail server	
Outgoing mail server	
<b>Email account details (3)</b>	
User Name	
Password	
Incoming mail server	
Outgoing mail server	
<b>Backup Systems (Clunk Click, CDs, Zip disks, external drive)</b>	
My Clunk Click account number is	
My Clunk Click encryption key is	
My Clunk Click password is (you may not have created one)	
My backup CDs/disks are stored in a fireproof or offsite location	

## 5 Rebuilding your System

When rebuilding your system, perform tasks in the following order:

1. Install the operating system
2. Create your internet connection (use a broadband or dial-up CD, or create the connection yourself)
3. Install your anti-virus software and firewall (or activate the Windows firewall, if not already on)
4. Download up-to-date virus definitions
5. Install your other applications from CD
6. Download any programs you normally get from the internet
7. Now restore your data from your backup medium, or if you are a Clunk Click client, carry out the following steps:
8. Start your web browser and go to [www.nicholson solutions.co.uk](http://www.nicholson solutions.co.uk)
9. On the home page click the link to on-line backup.
10. Follow the links to download and install the Clunk Click software
11. During the installation you will specify that you are reinstalling an existing account
12. You will be asked for your account number and encryption key
13. You will be asked for your password but this may be blank.
14. On completion of the install, the Retrieve View should show you a list of all the folders and files you normally back up. Click the check box beside each folder. When you have a green tick beside all the folders, click on Retrieve Now.
15. Select the option Automatically rename conflicting files currently on the drive, and click OK.
16. Your data will be restored from the Clunk Click server to your hard disk.