COMPUTERS MADE EASY

SIMPLE GUIDES TO GET THE BEST FROM YOUR COMPUTER

Stay safe on the Internet

Avoid viruses and online scams

The Internet can be a wonderful thing. But because it is essentially unregulated, and because the content you see may originate from the most unlikely places, this means that there are lots of hazards, too. Some are designed to frighten or trick you into giving away your money, or, even worse, identity or credit card details, whilst others are capable of doing it by stealth. Here, we'll explore a few well known and common tricks conmen employ, and how to avoid them.

1. Never, ever pay any attention to popups, banners, emails or webpages telling you that your computer has problems such as viruses, system problems or lack of security. Just ignore these or leave the site. Never download programs offering to fix these "problems" or programs offering to prevent them.   Real, reputable companies who create anti-virus and security software never use such selling tactics.   Even if the software claims that it is made by a name you have heard of, e.g. Microsoft, Norton or MacAfee, take absolutely no notice. If in doubt, ignore!

2.Sometimes, these programs may succeed in getting onto your system, and usually present themselves as real, legitimate anti-virus or system utility software.   They'll nag you by constantly wanting to scan your system for problems, and they always find some. However, these programs are entirely fake! After the scan, they will say that the program needs registering before it can clean up these "problems". Then they'll ask you to buy the program: NEVER do this! You could be handing over your identity or credit or debit card details to all kinds of criminals and conmen.   These programs can be difficult to remove, and often invite real viruses just to make the problem worse and therefore convince you to buy them.   Call an experienced computer technician.

3. Even more indidious are keyloggers. Whilst comparitively rare (but not uncommon), these are little programs that hide on your system and keep a record of everything you type. Most are capable of sending this record back to their creators. This way, conmen can get hold of your bank details.

Remember: vigiliance is far better than anti-virus software. Anti-virus sofware is "after the event", whereas the best policy is to be careful: prevention is better than cure.