AHS Goes Wireless!

Over the past two months, AHS has acquired and installed 13 wireless access points and deployed them throughout BMH and LHI. This initiative means that we now have wireless ethernet access just about anywhere in the building. If you have a portable computer with wireless capability, you can now access the internet quite easily. Just power up, open your web browser to:

http://www.laptop.uwaterloo.ca

enter your UWDIR userid and password, and you should be connected.

Clearly, having wireless access can be extremely useful to you for reading email, browsing the web, and updating both your Windows Updates and Antivirus Updates on your portable. You don’t have to register an IP address because one is automatically assigned when you log on.

If you have any questions, you can find out more from any one of the staff in the AHS Computing Office. Full instructions are available at:

http://www.ahs.uwaterloo.ca/ahsco/services/wireless.html

General Warning!!!

Heads-Up!

Information Systems and Technology (IST) report that on April 28th, a UW employee received a phone call from someone claiming to be from IST. This person instructed the UW employee to setup Remote Desktop Access on the PC.

As a general rule, please do not to take instructions for changes to your computer without permission from a member of AHS Computing. There are numerous computer scams in the wild. Do not become a victim, be a ‘smart’ computer user. If you are at all in doubt, please contact a member of AHS Computing for assistance.

The Meaning of... Ctrl-Alt-Delete

We are often asked why one has to press Ctrl-Alt-Del to login to Windows XP. The short answer is for increased security. The long answer is for increased security because the Ctrl-Alt-Del sequence is "guaranteed" to always bring you to “The Official Windows Login Screen.” Just about any programmer could write a program that looks like the Windows Login Screen. If a hacker were to put in the startup sequence to Windows, it is possible that you could come along and give this program your userid and password. That program could then in turn send your userid and password on to the intruder. Once the intruder has your userid and password, he or she could then gain access to your entire machine. By pressing Ctrl-Alt-Del first, there is no danger that you are entering your userid and password into anything other than the Official Windows Login Screen.

POWERPOINT TIPS

• When you’re running a Powerpoint Slide Show, you can make the screen go black by simply pressing the letter ‘b’. Pressing ‘b’ again brings you back to where you were.

• To start a presentation, press F5

• To jump to a specific slide right—click the mouse in your presentation and click on “Go-To-Slide”.

• To draw a perfect square: Depress the Shift key while dragging to create your square.

• To insert a blank line that is not preceded by a bullet point: Press Shift+Enter

• Instead of pressing the Enter key, To insert the copyright © symbol, enter (c)
  To insert the Trademark ™ symbol, enter (tm)
  To insert the registered ® symbol, enter (r)

• To quickly access the Slide Master: Click on the Slide View icon (at the top-left of the screen), while depressing the Shift key.

• To quickly format an AutoShape: Double click on the AutoShape.
Managing Your Home Computer

Is there always a need for anti-virus software?

Under which circumstances do you really need it, and under which is it not really necessary? Do I need it when I only bring documents home from a machine that’s already running anti-virus software.

Well, here is the synopsis:

Unless your computer is used exclusively on a mountain top in Outer Mongolia and never exchanges information of any sort with any other computer, anywhere, it is likely to be attacked by a virus program.

If you don’t have the latest, greatest Anti-Virus software on your computer it will succumb.

If you do have the latest and greatest Anti-Virus software on your computer and the virus definition file was updated within the last three to five days, it might not succumb.

With very few exceptions, a computer without anti-virus software is just like a car without brakes - it simply isn’t safe.

So what do I do now?

First, get a copy of a state-of-the-art anti-virus program. The AHS Computing Office recommends Symantec Ant-Virus, which is available at the IST CHIP, see http://ist.uwaterloo.ca/admin/norton.html. Once installed, run the automatic update over the Internet.

Ensure that the real-time scanning, and email and web scanning are on (which they are by default in the major programs) and check to make sure the automatic update is in place.

Finally, remember that your anti-virus software should be your last line of defense, not your first. The safety of your computer and the information it holds begins with how carefully you think about what you do with it.

CDRs v. CDRWs

CD-RW drives can write to two types of recordable CDs. CD-R disks can be read by nearly any PC with a CD-ROM drive, but users can only write to the CD-R once - the disks cannot be erased or overwritten with new information. They also offer 650 MB or 700MB of storage each. CD-RW disks can be overwritten hundreds of times, but these disks often can only be read by CD-RW drives. With a CD-R disk, you can add or update files incrementally; but once the disk is full, you cannot delete older files to make more room. A CD-RW drive lets you use a CD-RW disk much as you would any other storage medium, updating and deleting files as needed.

When to Use CD-R Discs

CD-R media can be read by virtually all CD-ROM, CD-Recordable, and CD-ReWritable drives (use this type of media if you want to listen to your music CDs in a stereo). CD-R is excellent for permanent data storage and should be used when you do not need to erase the data. They are less expensive per CD than CD-RW. Here are some ideas for using CD-R media:

- Permanently save large project files — BACKUPS
- Copy music onto CD for your own personal use
- Permanently save large project files

When to Use CD-RW Discs

CD-RW media is best used when you wish to move data between ‘known’ computers (i.e., from your laptop to your desktop). Ensuring that the CD drives, operating system and the CD burning/reading software are compatible between computer systems is essential if you wish to read your CD-RW.

Moral of the Story?

There are many compatibility issues with CD-RWs. It is better to be safe rather than sorry, use a CD-R!

Recommended Brands of CD-R

Sony, Memorex, Maxell, Fuji, HP

Did you know?

When a compact disc is written to, tiny rivets are made in the surface of the disc called stripes or pits. The areas between these pits are called lands, which together make up a pattern where data are written. From there, a CD-ROM drive uses a read head to interpret these patterns, which is done by focusing a laser beam on the surface of the disc. While the CD is spinning, this laser comes in contact with the lands and pits. If the laser comes in contact with a pit, the light is reflected off in all directions. However, if the light comes in contact with a land, it reflects back into the read head, triggering an electric impulse. A pattern is developed from these electric impulses, and the CD-ROM drive returns this pattern to the computer as a string of 1s and 0s. These binary or digital data are in turn interpreted by the software controlling the CD-ROM drive, and then translated into something the computer can use, be it an executable program, an image, or a sound file.

Source:
http://micro.magnet.fsu.edu/electromag/computers/compactdiscs/cd.html

Source:
http://www.uncc.edu/cs/howto/CDR_CDRW.htm