

The Home IT Specialist

Just as if your home were a business, you are the Information Technology (IT) Specialist of your home computer. As that IT Specialist, it is your responsibility to protect your computer—and any data stored in it. *You are in charge of the security of your home system*, meaning you have the responsibility of identifying any unusual activity on your system and responding to that activity in an effective and timely manner. This could entail fixing security weaknesses in your Internet service through the use of firewalls and virus detection software, repairing operating system difficulties through patches and updates, and simply staying abreast of these problems in general.

Earlier, we discussed the four major security threats: environmental natural, environmental manmade, human intentional and human unintentional, as well as the two major vulnerabilities associated with computers, which are through Internet connections and operating systems.

In order to effectively prevent vulnerabilities and threats from occurring, it is up to you as the IT Specialist to create countermeasures for them. Although no system can be 100% secure, having countermeasures in place can certainly lessen the likelihood of risks or vulnerabilities from being exploited on your computer.

There are three common countermeasures that you can easily implement on your home computer:

Technical: Technical countermeasures mean using software to protect your system, including installing firewalls and anti-virus software, as well as taking steps like changing the security settings of your Web browser.

Procedural: Procedural countermeasures are activities that you establish in order to prevent the exploitation of your computer. This includes scheduling scans and updates for an anti-virus program, password protecting accounts and screen savers, and backing up important data on disks.

Contracts: A set of easily-accessible, written and signed contracts will ensure that your children are following the rules you have set out for them in regards to using the computer and the Internet.

Summary

Remember that, although no system can ever be 100% tamper proof, having some simple countermeasures in place will help keep many intruders at bay and your computer safe. As your home's IT Specialist, it's up to you to make sure that these countermeasures are used and followed. It's also important to have consequences for not following policies and procedures. Grounding a child from using the computer for a week for not running the anti-virus software on a downloaded attachment might make him think twice before not doing it again.