

Tip for September 2004
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I have had an interesting couple of weeks with one computer looking as if it had a printer driver problem but actually it was infected with a virus and the only program that seemed to be affected was the printer software. If your computer is playing up at all, the first thing to suspect is a virus even though you may have an antivirus program installed and it is up-to-date. Viruses are getting slipperier by the minute. Sometimes the only solution is to reformat the hard drive and reload your operating system and all your programs, having first, of course, backed up all your data to a reliable secondary storage device e.g. a zip, CD or DVD drive.

People seem to get very confused with the term “firewall”. A firewall stops unauthorised access to your computer and this is important, especially if you have broadband as you are connected to the internet all the time.

Having said that, you really don't need more than one. Check that you ISP has a firewall. If it does, then that should suffice. If you have Windows XP, then you can enable a firewall here. So you don't need to buy an extra one. Big companies aren't going to tell you that, of course.

A cautionary note here. A client last week was having trouble browsing the internet, but once we turned off XP's firewall, she was fine. Hmmm. Interesting. Seems her ISP couldn't cope with an extra firewall.