



ANSWER QUEST TIP SHEET

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So you got a new computer ... A checklist of things to do

So, you have a new personal computer! Congratulations! Now what do you do? Here is a quick checklist of things to do on your new machine to make sure you have a safe and wonderful experience!

- 1. Make sure you have anti-virus software.** If not, run -- do not walk to your nearest computer store. There are many anti-virus software programs available; I am a big fan of Norton's Anti-Virus. There is also McAfee's, PC-cillin, and more. Go to <http://www.cnet.com> and search for keyword antivirus (no spaces) to see a list of reviews.
- 2. If you have anti-virus software, make sure it is up to date.** New viruses are found almost every day. The virus definitions (how the software identifies viruses) sometimes change on a daily basis, too. Norton and McAfee both have services that for the first year will update your virus definitions automatically (you just need to tell the software to do this). With Norton's Anti-Virus, this option is called Live Update. When you open Norton's Anti-Virus software (I'm running 2002 version), click on OPTIONS. On the left hand side click LIVE UPDATE. Make sure ENABLE LIVE UPDATE is check and so it APPLY UPDATES WITHOUT INTERRUPTING ME. After the first year there's a small fee to continue this automatic update. At any time, for free, you can simply go to the software manufacturer's site and download new virus definitions even if you have it set to do automatic updates. The biggest problem is remembering to do the updates often!

For Norton's Anti-Virus, you need to go to Symantec's website to download the newest virus definitions. Go to <http://securityresponse.symantec.com/avcenter/download.html> (make sure you pick the correct version of your anti-virus software before downloading the definitions).

- 3. If you are on cable modem or DSL, run "Windows Update" IMMEDIATELY!** These types of ISPs have you always connected to the Internet. This means you are always vulnerable to computer hackers if there is a bug in your software. Windows Update is a feature that Microsoft started to build into Windows 98 and is still present through Windows XP. If you are on dialup, you will need to connect to the Internet first before running Windows Update. Also, the first time you use the service, it might take a few hours to download all the updates I suggest starting it at night or when you won't need your telephone line for a while.

To run Windows Update, it is normally listed on your START menu, possibly under the PROGRAMS menu or under SETTINGS menu (according to your Windows version). If you cannot locate Windows Update, don't worry; simply open Internet Explorer and type <http://windowsupdate.microsoft.com> (you might be asked to download an update, make sure the screen is "signed" by Microsoft, then click YES). The screen has all the directions on how to scan your hard drive to check for software versions. It will list CRITICAL UPDATES AND SERVICE PACKS. These are the ONLY updates that you should absolutely do! If you are not sure, do not attempt this alone, ask a computer-savvy friend to help. Do not do any of the other updates unless someone tells you to. The CRITICAL UPDATES AND SERVICE PACKS are the essential "bug" fixes that are needed in order to keep you safe on the Internet and running in peak performance. You will need to run Windows Update repeatedly until there are no CRITICAL UPDATES.

- 4. Microsoft Office software also has updates available.** Go to <http://office.microsoft.com> and click on UPDATE YOUR SOFTWARE. On the next screen, click on SCAN MY COMPUTER TO FIND OFFICE UPDATES I NEED. This will check your machine and then show you what patches or updates you need applied to your Office or Works product. Simply check them all and click START INSTALLATION. You may need to do this a few times to catch them all.

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5. Use JUNK MAIL FILTERS and RULES. This discussion will use OUTLOOK as an example. Other e-mail software programs have similar features.

The JUNK MAIL FILTER allows you to mark a sender's e-mail as a "known junk e-mail sender." Outlook will automatically eliminate more e-mail from that address by automatically deleting it before you see it. To turn on the Junk E-mail filter in Outlook 2002 (different steps may be needed for other versions of Outlook) -- click TOOLS, choose ORGANIZE, then *WAYS TO ORGANIZE INBOX*, click JUNK E-MAIL. TURN ON both of the junk e-mail filters. Then whenever you want to mark a message junk e-mail, right-click on the message, click on JUNK E-MAIL and then choose either ADD TO JUNK SENDERS LIST or ADD TO ADULT CONTENT SENDERS LIST.

Using the JUNK MAIL FILTER only works if the sender consistently uses the same e-mail address. A lot of people who send junk e-mail use free e-mail accounts that they change often or they use a bulk e-mailing program that changes the senders address by just a little bit. Each change fools the JUNK E-MAIL FILTER. When this happens, use RULES to automatically delete junk e-mail. RULES are used to filter not only the sender's address but it can also filter who it was sent to, keywords in the subject and/or body plus other ways. I use rules for most junk-email because normally the "catch phrases" are easiest to name. I did not empty my DELETED ITEMS for two days just to see how much junk e-mail I received – 152 pieces!

To create a RULE in Outlook 2000 (different steps may be needed for other versions of Outlook) – click on TOOLS, click on RULES WIZARD. Click on NEW, leave it defaulted to CHECK MESSAGES WHEN THEY ARRIVE, click NEXT, scroll down the list of conditions until you find WITH SPECIFIC WORDS IN THE SUBJECT OR BODY. Check this option. In the RULE DESCRIPTION box, click on SPECIFIC WORDS and a new dialog box will open. Where it says: ADD NEW, type in the phrase that you want it to look for. Click ADD. Repeat this for as many different phrases or words you want it to filter. **WARNING:** Be careful ... if you filter for CHICK, you will loose all messages about baby chickens. Phrases are generally better than single words.

When you have added each phrase, click OK then NEXT. If you want OUTLOOK to delete those messages, check DELETE IT (**WARNING:** do not check PERMANENTLY DELETE IT – permanently delete it means it does not go to your deleted items but it is deleted beyond recovery). Even though I use rules extensively, I still only select DELETE and not PERMANENTLY DELETE. Sometimes e-mails that I want to KEEP are mistaken for junk (as in my example of CHICK). Click NEXT. If you want to make an exception to this rule, you would indicate it here. But normally you will just click NEXT. Name your rule – be specific! I normally name my rule for what it is filtering. Click FINISH.

Remember, if you need help with any item on this checklist, please ask a computer friend or you can email me at help@answerquest.com -- Happy Computing!

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DID YOU KNOW ... AOL users do not have to use the built-in AOL browser window? You can still use your favorite browser (i.e. Internet Explorer, Netscape, Opera, etc.). So if something doesn't look quite right in the AOL browser, simply minimize AOL (do not close it) and then open your browser of choice!

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