

How can you tell if your computer is safe?

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Details

A best practice to ensure that a user's computer is safe to use, is to check and see if they have their firewall enabled. The purpose of a firewall is to protect the individual's device from harmful traffic; Windows 7 and newer already have a firewall embedded into their software and is active right out of the box. Another feature that Microsoft offers is an automatic Windows update; the user can configure the updates to apply to applications that are not native to Microsoft as well. Anyone operating Windows 8 or newer has either Windows Security or Windows Defender, these are anti-virus software, and these also have to be updated on a regular basis. If the device does not come out of the box with anti-virus software installed, it can be downloaded.

Now that the out of box items are covered, the user can maintain computer safety by developing strong personal habits. Creating a strong password should be the first action taken when attempting to protect a computer; the more complex a password is, the harder it is to brute force. If ever the user should leave their computer unsupervised, they should lock their device using a password; the device owner could even go a step beyond normal security measures and encrypt their hard drive.

If at all avoidable, do not use public internet services. If the user must use a public wifi, they should create a secure connection for themselves, by utilizing a virtual private network. A virtual private network allows the user to encrypt their traffic; once the user is done with the public connection, they should disconnect their device from the network. As always, a good rule of thumb is to avoid any websites that are unknown to the user; a secure browser will help keep a user safe.

References

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