

SETTING UP YOUR NEW COMPUTER

Setting up your computer actually involves two things: securing it from attacks, and transferring your information from the old computer. **Security** is the more pressing issue. We deal with transferring your data later.

The Windows systems distributed with new computers this Christmas should include Service Pack 2. So they will be relatively well-protected out of the box.

However, assume the worst and attack potential security problems head-on. Here are the steps to follow:

—Before going online, activate the Windows XP firewall. Click **Start>>Control Panel. Double-click Windows Firewall. On the General tab, select On. Click OK.** If you get a blue window in Control Panel that says "Pick a Category," click Switch to Classic View on the left side. Follow the above instructions.

With the firewall set up, you'll be protected from any immediate threats. Viruses cannot attack you unless you open spam and let an attacker in. Use your common sense.

—If anti-virus software came with the computer, use it. Most come with a free trial period. Open the program so that it is running in the background. While you will not be able to update it until you sign on to the Internet, it's better than nothing.

—Double-check your file sharing. This can be a weakness. **Click Start>>Control Panel. Double-click Network Setup Wizard.** If that is not in Control Panel, click Start>>Help and Support. Put "Network Setup Wizard" in the box and press Enter. Click Network Setup Wizard in the left panel.

When the wizard opens, follow its steps. File sharing appears several pages into the wizard. It is normally disabled by default. If it is enabled, disable it.

—Set up your Internet service. Call your Internet service provider for instructions. Have the ISP walk you through any settings.

—**Go on the Internet and open Internet Explorer. Click Tools>>Windows Update.** Let Microsoft scan your computer. Install High Priority Updates. Follow Microsoft's instructions exactly, including reboots of the computer when necessary.

—Download a new firewall. A firewall should do two things: hide your computer from intruders' probes and keep malicious programs on your computer from contacting the Internet. The Windows XP firewall does not do the latter.

There are free firewalls that do both jobs well. Recommended: **ZoneAlarm.** Once **ZoneAlarm** is installed and running, disable the Windows XP firewall. Two firewalls can conflict with one another.

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