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System maintenance and upkeep

Following are some recommendations for protecting and maintaining your computer systems. Taking the following steps may save you some serious trouble and improve your computer's performance and may also improve lifespan of your computer hardware. Furthermore you need to know that there is no such thing as trouble free computing yet; in order to safeguard your computer and information you must keep yourself updated with the latest developments and safeguard your computer from unsafe environments and computing practices.

- **Make back ups of your important data.** Use floppy disks, Data CDs, Tape back ups, print a copy, use online backup Sites, or you can even send an email of your data to yourself for short term safekeeping (if you have an email account with a major email server like Yahoo or Hotmail, they may delete attachments after couple of months). Do not put off the back up of your data. Backing up your computer data is the most important step to take in securing and saving your information. It takes minutes to save and back up your work. Some useful links: <http://www.backup.com> <http://www.ibackup.com> or see our Back up instructions sheet for Windows XP.

- **Update and Run Grisoft's AVG anti-virus once every week.** If you do not have a reliable anti-virus program then install AVG anti-virus software on your computer, go to www.vinpax.com and click on the SERVICE link and you will be directed to Grisoft's free version of AVG anti-virus download page or visit: http://free.grisoft.com/softw/70free/setup/avg75free_467a1008.exe

- **Update and Run Ad-Aware software once every week** to detect nuisance and Advertising software. If you do not have a reliable adware protection program then install Lavasoft's Ad-Aware SE Personal Edition (it is free) software on your computer go to www.vinpax.com and click: http://www.download.com/3001-8022_4-10672044.html

- **Update and run Spybot software once every week** to detect nuisance and spy ware software. If you do not have a reliable spy-ware protection program then install Spybot Search and Destroy (it is free) software on your computer, go to www.vinpax.com and click on the SERVICE link and you will be directed to Spybot's download page or visit: <http://spybot.safer-networking.de/spybot/en/mirrors/index.html>

- **Run Windows Update first day of every month.** Open Microsoft's Internet Explorer > go to TOOLS menu > click on WINDOWS UPDATE and follow the instructions on screen. Do this at least once a month depending on your computer usage

- **Run Disk defragmenter first day of every month.** Go to START button > click on ALL PROGRAMS > click on ACCESSORIES > click on System Tools > click on DISK DEFRAGMENTER and follow the instructions on screen.

- **Use a Firewall** to protect against malicious intrusions. Windows XP is provided with an integrated firewall that is usually sufficient for basic computer users. For better protection a more sophisticated firewall should be used to manage internet traffic, a good free product is Zone Alarm which can be downloaded at www.zonelabs.com Please remember that a firewall may be tricky to operate since you need to give it definitions to allow or deny programs access to and from the internet. If you make the wrong access assignment to a program it can affect the functionality of your system. To properly use Zone Alarm 6.5 see the following video tutorial:

http://download.zonelabs.com/bin/free/1025_update/zlsSetup_70_337_000_en.exe

- **Internet Browser Problems** Most virus problems occur due to lack of updating every computer system's essential programs such as Operating System, Virus protection and etc. Some security breaches occur when your Internet Browser is attacked due to security faults within browsers, this happens when your Browser is attacked while visiting malicious Web Sites. In order to reduce the risk of being attacked by malicious Web Sites we recommend you use a browser that is less susceptible to attacks such as Firefox by Mozilla, download for free at: <http://www.mozilla.com>

It is crucial to keep all your software updated by following your software's update procedure. This will make sure that all the newest software definitions and new fixes will be installed in order to run your computer efficiently and at its optimum performance level. If you do not update your antivirus, antispyware programs then they will not work properly, you must always run updates before you intend to run the program to detect problems. The above listed software are available for free on the internet, there are some products that may offer higher security, which can be purchased, such as: Symantec's Norton Anti Virus and Computer Associates' Pest Patrol for Spyware. Follow this instruction step by step consistently. Please remember to only use reliable Web Sites and only download programs or media from reputable Web Sites. For more information visit www.vinpax.com and click on the SERVICE button.