FROM BEHIND THE SERVICE COUNTER

Mythbusters (continued from last month…)

Last month we discussed some popular misconceptions ([March 2013](#)) that have lingered through the years.

Here are a few more…

a) **Using multiple AVs, malware programs and/or system monitors strengthens your system's security.**
Oops. Nothing could be further from the truth. Each program that involves constant monitoring affects the accessible memory and performance of your computer. More importantly, it's not unusual for competing programs to attack each other. The resultant conflict can have unpredictable results, but mostly not good ones.

b) **I've been relying on Ad-aware and Spybot for years… or "what once popular programs have long since become obsolete?"**
Just as with everything else in our full-bore pell-mell world, good malware programs come and go. The requirement for a good malware program is actually somewhat redundant if your antivirus program is worthy and the fewer programs you can have resident in memory, the more efficient your system will be. Many of the FREE maintenance products have no value and more than usual have an ulterior motive, if they don't open a portal to obnoxious ads, they register you for the spammers. Nothing, I repeat NOTHING is truly free.

c) **Adding more RAM improves computer speed… or does it?**
Yes and then no. As your computer does it's work, temporary files are created and then saved on an ongoing basis. Once your computer fills all the free space in RAM it then starts to drop data into a temporary file on the hard drive. This is what is referred to as "virtual memory" and identified as the "pagefile" on the hard drive. This process of writing data to the drive and then reading it back in when required is very slow in electronic data transfer terms so it the least preferred way to work. By increasing the amount of available RAM to a system you cut down on the requirement for hard drive usage and the system appears to be faster. In fact it really is reaching more capacity, not speed. It's the equivalent of a truck going the same speed on the highway but carrying a bigger load thereby being more efficient.

d) **You can always get create extra hard drive space using Drive Compression.**
Please never do this! The resulting issues with a compromised compressed drive include total data loss, almost impossible data recovery, difficult disk maintenance, very slow data transfer rates and total pending doom if you perform this procedure on the same drive more than once.
Drive compression is a trick from the 80's to address smaller drive capacities. It essentially creates one huge full file one your drive. When you go to save data the compression algorithm kicks in and replaces multiple zeros and ones in the raw binary code with a smaller string of data that then has to be decompressed by the computer when you go to read it. Again, in electronic standards, this process is very, very slow. With the reduced price of hard drives, it no longer makes sense to use drive compression and in fact is a bad choice.

Next month we need to discuss how to avoid the pitfalls of the web. The bad guys are getting more clever every day and we're finding clients that have succumbed to the trickery. Stay tuned!

Happy computing and be careful out there!
Harley Bloom
Bloom MicroTech