⌨ Computer Corner

Keep Your Family Safe From Intruders And Hackers

by Peder Ulander

(NAPSA)—You can protect your home network from unauthorized users.

The first line of defense is securing your network at the router level. Routers act as the "gatekeeper" in letting Internet and other traffic into your network. Virtually all routers have some type of security features that prevent others from connecting to your home network. One such feature is the ability for only computers behind your router to initiate a connection, so no one can just reach into your network from the outside. For wireless network users, there are features that can "hide" the network so that it's not broadcasting its existence. You can also set up a password that is required when a computer or device connects to your network. This prevents outsiders, whether fraudsters or lazy neighbors looking for free Internet service, from connecting to your router and your network.

In addition to securing your network through the router, there are many software solutions that can help protect your network and, more important, your family. With a router-only solution, it's virtually impossible to monitor what every family member on your network is doing on the Internet and whether they are unwittingly allowing malicious sites and tools to attach themselves to their computers. Software security can filter out specific Web sites known to be sources for viruses and can verify the integrity of specific files and e-mails. It can also monitor activity, identify intrusions (phishing schemes, malware and social engineering) and send you alerts

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about suspect activities.

Additional security can also be used for blocking specific Web site content for specific computers used by your children, while leaving Internet access open for the rest of the network. This is known as parental control software.

Network security works best when it is layered; when it's both hardware and software based. By combining hardware infrastructure and user-level software protection, you raise the bar for intruders and hackers.

For years, Cisco has been working to combine the strengths of router hardware and software—in layered fashion—to bring greater intelligence and security into the home network. Linksys by Cisco Wireless Routers, Cisco Network Magic software and Home Network Defender software from Trend Micro are examples of hardware/software security layering that helps you block threats and create a more secure home network.

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