

# Small Business Computer Security Tips

## Small Businesses Need To Be More Savvy Against Security Threats

*Enhanced, Easy-To-Use Solutions Can Help Protect Data To Provide Peace Of Mind For Businesses*



(NAPSA)—Small-business owners today have access to a number of affordable and easy-to-use technologies to help their businesses run smoothly, but many entrepreneurs often overlook a critical issue—keeping their vital data secure.

According to a recent survey conducted by ConStat,\* 80 percent of small-business technology decision-makers feel that preventing data loss is important to their business, ranking it in their top three of six technology concerns. Yet, out of the top seven technology investments small-business technology decision-makers are likely to make, data security ranked only fifth among overall technology budget priorities.

Many small-business owners say they just don't have the time, budget or the understanding of IT to implement comprehensive security solutions. This does not take into account, however, the consequences of losing confidential business, customer and employee information to a virus or hacker—which can result in lost time and money spent trying to recover it.

Consider this—up until a few years ago, small-business owner Victor Lozano was still writing down reservations on the back of a napkin for his tourism company, Dolphin Excursions. After his business started to take off, Lozano realized he needed a safe and efficient way to manage information, so he took security matters into his own hands.

"Security for our computer system is extremely important. We have customer data, and credit card, financial and contact information; I can't have anybody hacking into that system. We need to protect ourselves and our customers," Lozano said.

Lozano implemented Windows Live OneCare, an all-in-one PC care solution with powerful protection and simple PC maintenance for consumers and small businesses. The program makes it easier for him to manage multiple PCs with options for data backup and enhanced security across a business. In addition to network, Internet and Wi-Fi management, OneCare automatically identifies applications that may slow down or threaten a system's performance level, recommends a solution and provides a full report upon request.

"I now have peace of mind," Lozano said.

Having peace of mind is something all small businesses deserve. Implementing a new security program can be a quick, simple and affordable process, requiring as little as three steps toward helping ensure that data is kept secure:

**1. Security.** Regularly run antivirus, antispyware and firewall features to help protect your computers from viruses, spyware, worms, Trojan horses, hackers and other threats. Also, be sure to limit Internet activity to only trustworthy and reliable Web sites.

**2. Backup.** Be sure to regularly back up your data to prevent corruption or loss of important company information, financials and customer data. Seventy percent of small businesses ranked ensuring computer and network security among their top three concerns out of six, along with preventing data loss and networking capabilities.

**3. Stay updated.** Think about updating your operating system. Some small businesses noted that incompatibility with existing infrastructure seems to be a barrier to implementing new security solutions. By deploying the latest security-enhanced programs, your small business will significantly reduce vulnerabilities and can realize increased performance benefits. Consider purchasing software through a volume licensing program, which can save you money and provide additional support for businesses with more than five computers.

As small businesses make proactive security part of their IT plans, it's important to remember that there are easy and cost-effective ways to help keep your technology secure. For more tips, visit Microsoft Corp.'s security guidance center at <http://www.microsoft.com/smallbusiness>.

*\*Study conducted by ConStat Inc. (<http://www.constat.com>) among 200 technology decision-makers in businesses with five to 49 employees. Sample provided by e-Rewards, Inc. online research panel (<http://www.e-rewards.com/researchers>).*