

An Informative Newsletter for Our Customers

Online Privacy Issues in the Digital Age

These days, we all need to take precautions when we are surfing the web to safeguard our privacy and computer systems from hackers, spam mailers, and harmful viruses. As more people invest in "always on" broadband connections, the need to secure one's computer grows increasingly important. Just having a virus scanner installed is no longer enough! Here are some helpful ways you can surf the Internet, while protecting your privacy and data.

1. Use A Backup Address To Reduce Spam.

Many sites, such as discussion forums and especially retailers, require that you supply them with an email address. Unfortunately, some of these sites sell or pass along the information you give them to spammers, who then constantly bombard your email box with junk mail. Most Internet Service Providers now allow you to create multiple email boxes on the same Internet account. You can create a separate email address to give out publicly, which will help divert spam away from your own personal box. If you

are only allowed to have one email address, you can sign up for a free email account from a service such as HotMail.com. For added protection, you can either buy separate spam-filtering software, or use an ISP which provides anti-spam services (such as AOL or Earthlink).

2. Use A "Firewall" To Protect Your Computer.

It's dangerous to be on the Internet without some form of "firewall" protection. Hackers are constantly scanning the Internet, looking for vulnerable computers to attack or infect. A firewall helps defeat these scans. Furthermore, personal firewall programs can help detect and defeat "spyware", which are programs that attempt to communicate information about your system back to a remote source. While Windows XP has its own built in firewall program, we suggest you use ZoneAlarm. The basic version is free for personal use, and comes with frequent updates.

If you want to hook multiple com-

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Points of Interest:

- *Online Privacy Concerns.*
- *Today's Hot New Products!*
- *Video Game Review!*
- *New Viruses to look out for.*
- *Computer Joke of the month.*

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- Introducing Arete Computer Consulting (pg 2-3)
- Video Game Review (pg 3)
- Beware the Virus! (back cover)
- Computer Joke of The Month (back cover)

What's Hot in the Industry Today?

Sick of the standards war? When it comes to finding a cutting edge DVD burner many of our customers are. That's why we are happy to announce the arrival of Sony's newest DVD burner that supports all four of the industry's currently disputed standards! The burner, Model# DRU500A, is one of the only burners that supports DVD-R/-RW, DVD+RW/R as well as CD-R/-RW media!

Why is this important? Well right now the industry can't make up its mind as to what standard of media will win the final battle, so everyone purchasing DVD burners today runs the risk of eventually ending up with a very expensive paper weight. The beauty of purchasing Sony's DRU500A is that no matter who wins, you will still be able to use your burner! The only drawback is that many other people have realized this, making it a popular and

sometimes hard drive to find.

We had a chance to test one of these recently, and it worked beautifully. We had no trouble with the software installation or setup, although the bundled software the drive comes with is fairly simplistic. For those of you who are interested in having a bit more control over your authoring sessions, we recommend that you look into buying something a little more robust. We are more than happy to help you purchase one of these drives, should you want to take the next step into DVD authoring. It's a great way to both archive large data files, as well as create your own movies that will play back on most modern DVD players.



Sony DRU500A Internal DVD Burner

Who is Arete Computer Consulting?

A Letter of Introduction, from George B. Scheurer

I am glad you are taking the time to look at our newsletter. As many of you know, The Computer Farm Inc. was closed in 1998 after doing business in our valley for 15 years. Some of our customers lost track of us at that time, but many of you have continued to work with me as George B. Scheurer Consulting. Now I am very happy to announce that we are back in the family computer business again. We have formed a partnership called "Arete Computer Consulting, LLP." Arete (r-uh-tay) is a Greek word that stands for, "Quality, Excellence and Virtue." It is our company motto.

We have changed our way of doing business to reflect the reality of the computer industry. We are no longer a storefront with a small inventory. We sell through our web site (www.aretecomputer.com) with access to \$15,000,000 worth of inventory. Yet, we are still the same qualified family you counted on for fast on site service, troubleshooting and repair. We charge

the same rate for evenings, weekends, holidays or regular business hours. We are there when you need us.

Our mission is to serve our customers with the utmost integrity and competence. We are a new partnership but with 20 years of hands on computer experience in the Western Massachusetts community. We offer highly skilled and certified technicians with over 50 years of combined experience.



George B. Scheurer
Founder Of George B.
Scheurer Consulting

Our goal is to have enough new customers to double our present business within one year.

I am proud to work with my family. They are all very talented, hardworking, honest, and practical New Englanders. We enjoy what we do and have fun while we do it. We have had many customers who came to our family computer store decades ago and are still doing business with us today. We don't arrive with a splash and fade with the trend. We live here. We work here. Lets us work for you.

So what work can we do? I will let the bios of each of the partners speak for themselves. I only wish to add that we have years of experience working professionally in the computer industry combined with the never ending education and training it takes to stay on top of this field. We can sell you a custom configured computer that exactly meets your needs. We can help you put the right software in it to make your work easier or your computer experience more enjoyable.

We can install this computer in a hardwired or wireless network that sits safely behind a firewall in your home. We can install this computer in your business network and create virtual private networks that meet government specifications for encrypted data transfer. We can write software for an application that requires something more specific than off the shelf programs provide. We can take your digital movies, add effects, edit, and store them on DVD ready to play. We gladly solve problems for you at home or in your business.

Carol A. Scheurer

Carol Scheurer was first introduced to programming at the Institute of Marine Science in Fairbanks, Alaska. That was in 1970 when programs and data were keypunched on cards and submitted for overnight execution on a room-sized computer system.

Since then, Carol has evolved her programming skills through the CP/M, DOS, UNIX and Windows operating systems. While her favorite language was once dBase for DOS, she now works with Access, Visual Basic, Excel, HTML, JavaScript and SQL.

Carol's specialty is developing menu-driven database systems for clients with unique needs. One of the systems she developed is a multi-user, multi-town tracking system for the collection of delinquent taxes. This systems prints time sensitive notices to the delinquents, produces reports, and sends and receives data from the RMV's billing and non-renewal system. She has also written custom systems for such diverse clients as a video store, and a chemical mixing company.



Joshua M. Mintzer



Josh Mintzer has been working with computer hardware since 1990. He graduated from Hartwick College in 1997 with a Bachelors Degree in Information Science. He then continued on to the School of Information at the University of Michigan, where he received his Masters Degree, also in Information Science, in 1999.

Before coming to Arete, he worked as a Technical Officer for J.P. Morgan Chase & Co, where he provided support on a wide range of cash management products. Previously, he had worked for System Engineering Consultants (Now part of General Electric Medical Systems Information Technology) and Fas-Tech, a software company that produces time and attendance systems. In 2000, he received his Microsoft Certified Professional, CompTIA A+ and CompTIA Network+ certifications. In 2003, he became a Cisco Certified Network Associate.

Taneka A. Mintzer

Taneka Mintzer started her career in computers in 1993, when she worked at the Computer Farm Inc. as the Service Room Manager. When the Computer Farm Closed in 1998 she chose to pursue her interest in both computers and art, by combining the two and becoming a Computer Art major at the School of Visual Arts in NYC. After finishing her degree, she decided to return to the valley to put down her roots. She comes to Arete offering her computer graphics and desktop publishing expertise. She does freelance graphic design, creates business and personal web sites, edits and creates motion graphics for video, and offers tutoring in a variety of graphics programs.



(Privacy Issues, Continued from page 1)

puters up to a single broadband connection, you should get a dedicated "router". Most routers have a hardware firewall that will protect all of your computers from scanning attempts. Be aware that basic hardware firewalls will not protect you from spyware! We suggest that you buy a Linksys or D-link brand router if you want to share your broadband connection.

3. Use An Anonymous Surfing Program

If you are concerned about third parties tracking your web surfing habits and collecting information on you through scripts and "cookies", you can use an anonymous surfing program for protection. A well-recommended package is Private

Surfing, sold by Anonymizer.com, who offer a range of privacy protection programs.

4. Test Your System

Gibson Research Corporation (www.grc.com) offers free tools and web-based applications that can test the strength of your system security. We utilize this site after making any major changes to the security of one of our own computers.

While these are just a handful of things that can be done to protect yourself on the Internet, they are some of the most basic and important. If you have any questions or would like contact us about helping to secure your own system, be it corporate or home, email us at info@aretecomputer.com.

Video Gamer's Review by Taneka Mintzer

Overall Game Score: **7.50**

Heroes of Might and Magic IV - Winds of War Expansion

I've been a fan of Heroes of Might and Magic for years. I love the creatures, the castles, the maps, the imaginative campaign story lines. I've played this game for hours upon hours, through all its iterations and expansions. So as you can imagine, I was excited to hear about the full scale game changes made in its forth incarnation. I'd heard some reviews, but whether they liked it or not they all agreed that the basic structure of the game was completely different. I had to see this for myself.

I went out and bought it the moment it hit the shelves. The second I loaded my first map though, I knew I was in trouble. There is nothing I hate more, no pet peeve stronger than my dislike of the "fog of war". Maybe it's just my temperament, maybe I'm the only one who hates chasing after my enemies like a blind buffoon. But I hate it, and you

can't turn it off. Maybe I'm also the only one who thought the kingdom management screen was a godsend. Admit it, once you become an evil overlord with power beyond reckoning, it was nice to be able to manage all 15 of your castles from one screen, not having to wait for each castle to load individually before buying up the creatures within. The subtle changes they made to this game are too numerous to mention but it was true, it was no longer the same game.

Out of habit rather than desire, I also bought the latest expansion, the Winds of War. While some of the new campaign stories are interesting, it did nothing but add a couple more pretty creatures. I still play it, out of loyalty rather than genuine interest, but as much as some of the new functions have grown on me, it's just not the same.

Arete

Computer Consulting, LLP

Quality. Excellence. Virtue.

P.O. Box 60246
Florence, MA 01062

An Informative Newsletter for Our Customers

www.aretecomputer.com

Beware the Virus!

As always, the best protection against computer viruses is to have a virus protection program installed and running at all times on your computer. We recommend either McAfee or Norton Anti-Virus. Perform regular scans on all of your hard drives and never download files from a website or email attachment you are unfamiliar with. Viruses can hide in anything!

According to Norton's website, the latest serious virus threat comes from:



W97M.Bench.G is a simple macro virus that infects the currently active document and Normal.dot template when an infected document is opened. Once Normal.dot is infected, clean documents will be infected when they are opened.

The virus sets the animation property of the font of the active document to SparkleText or Shimmer, depending on the current time.

When a document is opened, W97M.Bench.G does the following: Checks the current time, if the time is between 30 and 40 minutes past the hour, the virus displays the following Office Assistant message:

Our Motto:

Tell me, I forget;

Show me, I remember;

Involve me, I understand;

Skyline College...

On our way to success! ;)

(Hopefully)".

Then, the document's font is set to Animated SparkleText.

If the time is later than 40 minutes past the hour, the virus will display this message:

I was born to shimmer! Was born to shine! Born to radiate!

Sigh! Everything's getting fuzzy and blurred...

The document's font is then set to the Shimmer Animation.

If your computer is displaying any of these symptoms run a virus scan and call us immediately!

Computer Joke of the Month:

I work in a busy office, and when a computer goes down it causes quite an inconvenience.

Recently one of our computers not only crashed, it made a noise that sounded like a heart monitor.

"This computer has flat-lined!" A co-worker called out with mock horror. "Does anyone here know mouse-to-mouse?"