Protect Your PC

It's in the news, you read about it, you hear about it and some of us have experienced it. You start getting "tons" of pop-up messages, your computer starts running slower, it continually freezes, your home page changes and then eventually, it crashes! Chances are you were a victim of Spyware, viruses, worms or Trojans.

Spyware is software that infiltrates your computer via downloads and some software installations. This is done without your consent and in most cases, without your knowledge. This software can collect your personal information, record the sites you visit and send you "tons" of unwanted advertising.

Viruses & Worms & Trojans are harmful malicious programs that can cause serious damage to your computer, files and hardware and information on your computer. They can even spread themselves to others via your computer.

There are several things we can do to protect our computer. Some items are available as a free download, others cost to purchase and some cost to maintain a service. Due to the nature of our business and that it is run via the internet, we are requiring that all PICI associates install, download and run all the software and applications mentioned below. All PICI associates will be required to provide "proof" that they have these items by submitting a print screen (instructions on how to do this are below) of such items.

First Three Steps
(1) Use an internet firewall

A firewall is a protection barrier between your computer and the internet. Windows XP Service Pack 2 (SP2) installs and automatically runs a firewall. If you have not downloaded SP2 from Windows Update, it is important to do so.

To check if you have SP2, go to: My Computer-look on the left side for: view system information-click on that and you will see the following:


If you don't have SP2-go to www.microsoft.com or you can access Windows Update from your START menu.

(2) Get Computer Updates

Windows XP has an excellent feature which is called "Automatic Updates". By enabling this, you can be assured that your computer will receive all updates. There are various settings to select. If you have constant internet connection (DSL, cable) it is best to select "Automatic" and set a time for the system to run (early morning is a good time). If you have dial-up, select an option that best fits your situation, but under no circumstances should anyone select "turn off automatic updates". To view your Automatic Updates settings, go to: CONTROL PANEL-SECURITY CENTER-AUTOMATIC UPDATES (see figures below)

From Control Panel – click on Security Center – then look for Automatic Updates
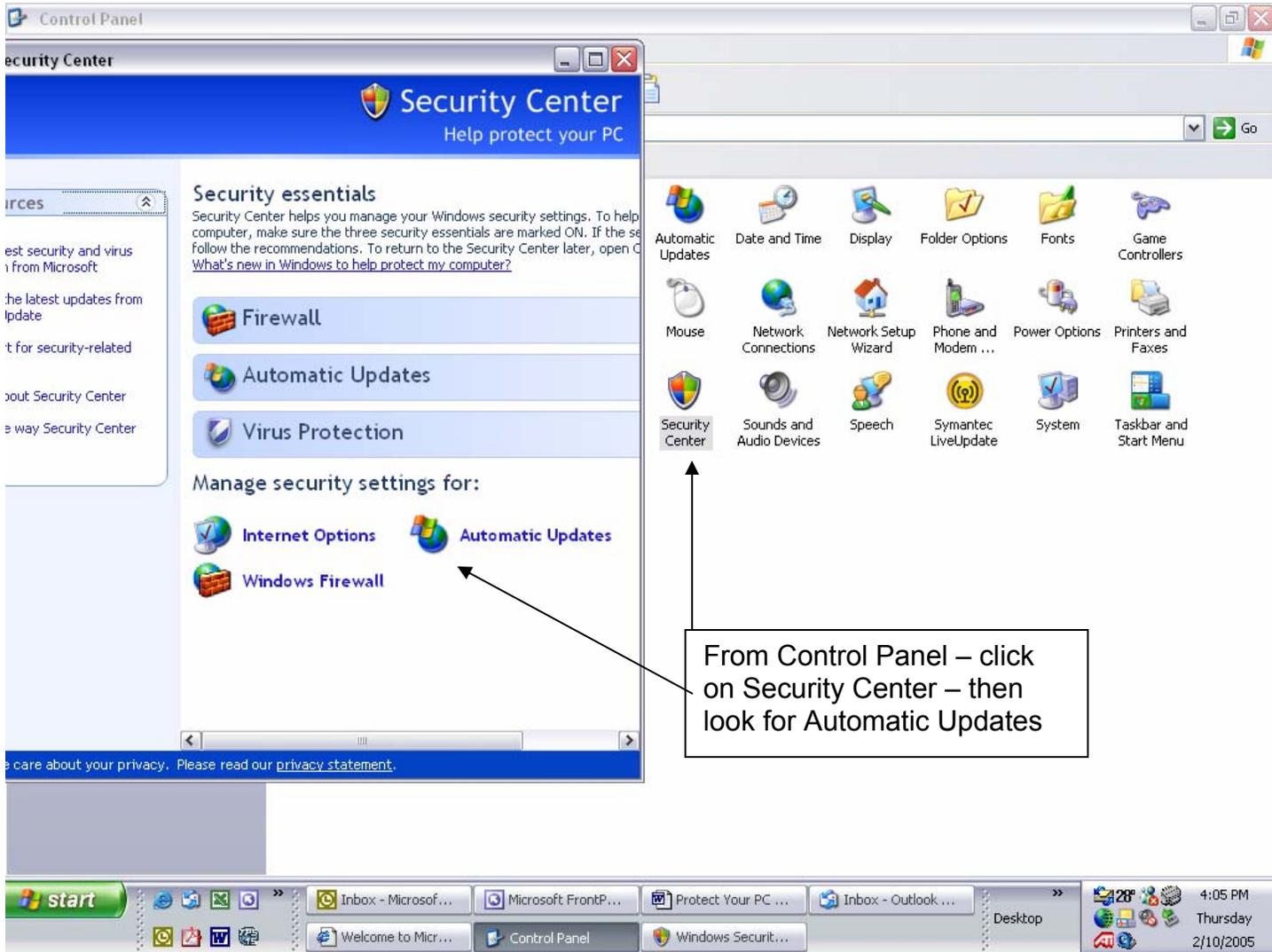
Below is an example of setting the updates to run automatically:

Use this feature if you have DSL/Cable

Use this feature if you have dial-up connection
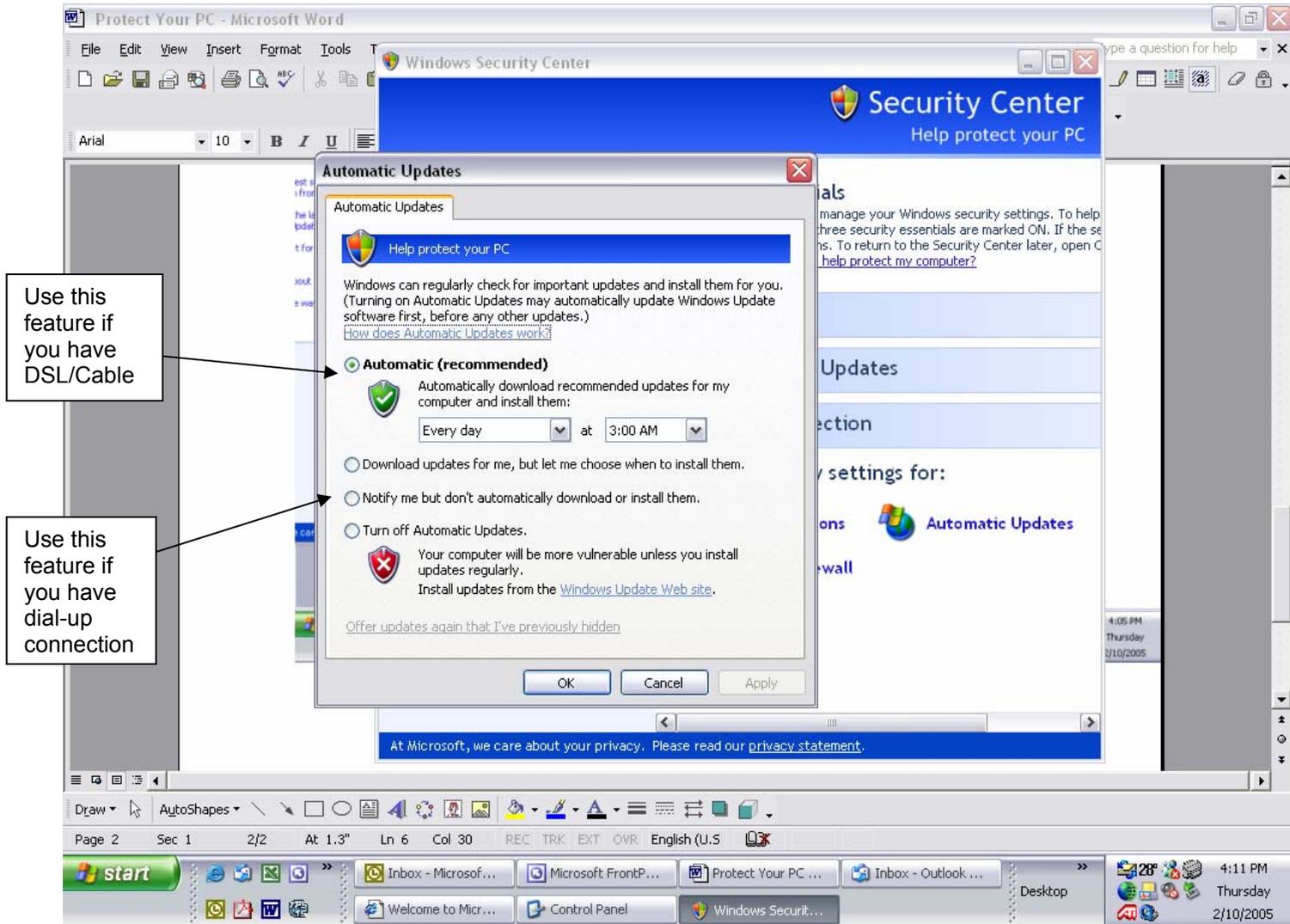
In order to run the Automatic Update, you will need to be sure your computer is turned on.   There has been controversy on whether it is good or bad to leave your computer on all day, every day. Doing so will not harm your computer or wear out the parts. Many newer computers have energy saving features which allow scheduled tasks such as defragging a hard drive or security updates to run when they are activated, but when they are not, the system goes into a "sleep" mode. It is recommended that those who have constant connection (DSL or cable) to schedule such tasks to automatically run. In any event, it is suggested that you turn your monitor off when not in use. This will not affect any scheduled tasks.

(3) Use Up-to-Date Anti-Virus Software

Most people think and feel that the antivirus software you receive in your "package" with your computer is fine. This is not necessarily true. We feel that while some antivirus software may be sufficient, we are requiring that all PICI business computers run ***Norton Internet Security Anti-Virus*** software. There is a BIG difference between just Norton Anti-Virus and Norton Internet Security Anti-Virus. The Internet Security protects you while you are online. The other does NOT. When surfing the internet, you are susceptible to viruses, worms, Spyware and Trojans. Norton Internet Security Anti-Virus protects you while surfing the internet. IN addition to this, we are requiring that all PICI business computers obtain a subscription to the "LiveUpdate" feature of Norton Internet Security Anti-Virus. There is a yearly fee and what this does is download the latest fixes, cures and virus definitions. This is an important part of computer protection. Fixes, cures and definitions are being written as fast as hackers are creating the harmful programs and software. LiveUpdate has a feature that alerts you when new updates are available for downloading. Some updates may require you to restart your machine, so install them when it won't interfere with your work.

LiveUpdate is a subscription service that updates your computer with products and components that protect your computer continuously, if used properly.

When updates are available, you will see a flashing icon in this area. Click on icon and proceed with updates.

Next Step - Additional Installations

In addition to the above, we are requiring all PICI business computers to have the following free downloads installed to that help protect the computer from Spyware. These are essential as some spyware is not detectable with Windows Updates or Norton Security systems and can be transmitted via your email address book which makes everyone vulnerable.

They are: Spybot-Search & Destroy 1.3
Ad-Aware SE v 1.05

Instructions for downloading each are as follows:

Spybot-Search & Destroy 1.3
www.safer-networking.org/en/index.html
After reading page, click on "download"
Donation is optional
Select: Spybot-Search & Destroy 1.3 (download here button)
Select: any of the mirror sites and look for Spybot download
Follow all the online instructions (they might vary between mirror sites so further specific instructions are not being written)
When you come across "file download security" boxes – select RUN.
You will have an option to create registry backups – do this. When you run Spybot, it may take awhile and you will need to restart your machine. You may experience that some of the items found might not be "fixed" the first time, and once you restart your machine, Spybot will run again capturing those left over items.

Ad-Aware SE v 1.05
http://www.pcworld.com/downloads/file_description/0,fid,7423,00.asp
Follow the online instructions. The name of the file that you will be downloading will appear as: aawsepersonal.exe from downloads.pc.world.com
You may receive a message "Publisher security warning" – select RUN
Once downloaded, you should run the program which will scan your computer. After scan is complete, you should quarantine the files found. If you need additional help with this program, please refer to the Help sections.

Print Screen Instructions

We will require that you produce "proof" of the above items being installed and operating on your computer. This can be done by using the Print Screen function of your keyboard. Bring up the item that needs to be "copied" – for example: Norton Internet Security Software. Press the "PRINT SCREEN" button that is generally on the top row of your keyboard, above the "INSERT" button. It appears as if nothing happens. This is ok. Next, open Microsoft Word to a new document and press the "PASTE" button. The exact screen shot of the item will be displayed. Save this document and it is then ready to be printed or emailed as an attachment.

Generally the PRINT SCREEN button is located on the top row of a keyboard.

Basic Instructions: What is on your screen is what you will get!
"**PRINT SCREEN**" button – Open new **WORD** document – Press "**PASTE**" button

Lastly - Monthly Computer Maintenance

It is important to perform certain maintenance functions monthly to ensure your computer system is running at optimum proficiency. The following are functions you should perform at the end of each month:

1) Clear temporary internet files & cookies
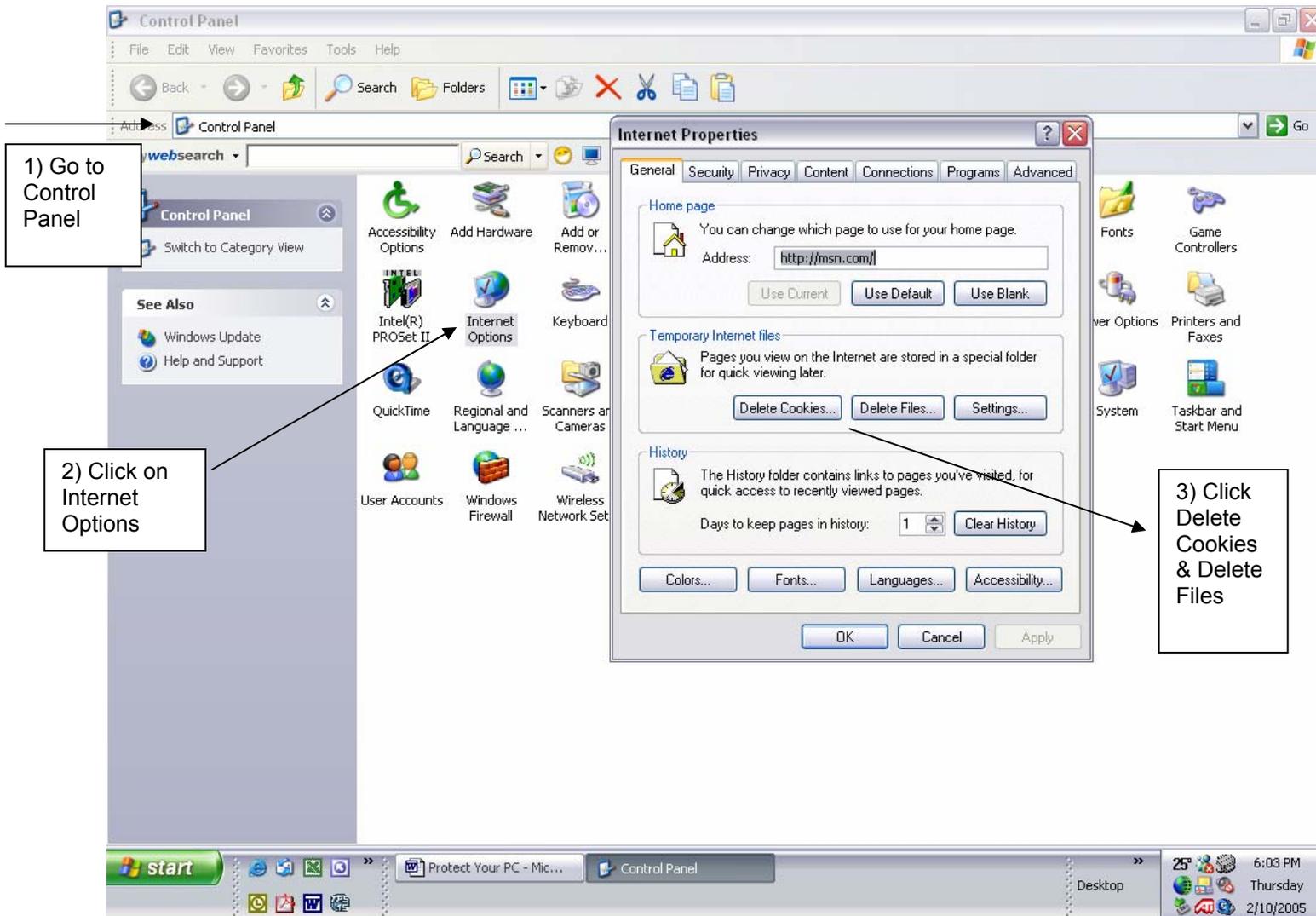
2) Empty Deleted folders in email programs and empty the Recycle Bin
3) Back up your files – for more information see: www.microsoft.com/athome/security/update/howbackup.mspx
4) Check for Windows Updates (if you do not have it set to run automatically)
5) Run LiveUpdate virus definition protection
6) Run full scan of computer using Norton Internet Security
7) Run Spybot update
8) Run Ad-Ware update
9) Run system tools (START-ALL PROGRAMS-ACCESSORIES-SYSTEM TOOLS – select disk clean up and/or disk defragmenter)