

**COMPUTER SECURITY LEADERS JOIN FORCES  
TO EDUCATE CONSUMERS FOR PERSONAL FIREWALL DAY  
ON JANUARY 15, 2004**

*McAfee, Microsoft, Sygate, TruSecure and Zone Labs Sponsor Industry-wide Cooperative Public Service Initiative Endorsed by the Information Technology Association of America and the SANS Institute*

San Francisco, CA – On January 15, 2004, America's top computer software and security organizations will mark the start of a nationwide public service effort to educate consumers on protecting their home computers. Novice computer users can learn how to find and use tools that will protect a PC connected to the Internet from hackers on the Personal Firewall Day Web site ([www.personalfirewallday.org](http://www.personalfirewallday.org).) Personal Firewall Day is also a call to firewall experts to share their expertise and advice with their friends, family, and the public. The effort is sponsored by McAfee, Microsoft, Sygate, TruSecure and Zone Labs. In addition, both the Information Technology Association of America (ITAA) and the SANS Institute, a leading security information and training organization, have endorsed Personal Firewall Day.

A personal firewall creates a protective barrier between your computer and potentially harmful content on the Internet. All information entering or leaving the computer must pass through the firewall, allowing only authorized communications to pass.

Users set rules for the firewall that can systematically allow or block incoming traffic from a specific location. The configuration of those rules, in addition to other security settings, provides a security agent that protects the computer. Personal firewalls not only keep threats from getting on a computer, they also keep threats already on PC from getting out.

A study conducted by America Online for the National Cyber Security Alliance discovered that 86 per cent of consumers keep sensitive information on their PCs, making any unprotected computer an attractive target for online predators. In addition, Gartner, Inc. reported that seven million U.S. adults were victims of identity fraud during the 12 months ending in June 2003, representing a 79 percent year-to-year increase in identity theft.

“Many people are unaware of the need for a personal firewall on their home PC,” said Paul Robertson of TruSecure, the leading provider of intelligent risk management products and services. “If you are not using a firewall then you face a very high risk of having your system compromised.”

“We want to let consumers know that their connection to the Internet is a two-way street and criminals can use that connection to attack your computer,” said Russ Cooper, moderator of the NTBugtraq security mailing list. “People can protect themselves simply by using a personal firewall.”

“If we will each invest the time on Personal Firewall Day to make sure five friends know the importance of updated operating systems, anti-virus, and personal firewalls, we may just start a movement,” said Stephen Northcutt, Director of Training and Certification at The SANS Institute.

The goal of Personal Firewall Day is to educate the public about the dangers that they may face while connected to the Internet. Some of the threats detailed at [www.personalfirewallday.org](http://www.personalfirewallday.org) include:

- **Hackers**

Hackers try to take over other people’s computers, usually to steal files, vandalize the hard drive, or use a computer as a base to launch other attacks.

- **Viruses and Worms**

These are programs that spread from computer to computer. Sometimes that's all they do, but sometimes they delete files, send unauthorized mail from a computer and open "back doors" for hackers to take control of the computer. Viruses and worms can arrive on a computer through email, or by exploiting flaws or holes in applications or your operating system.

- **Trojan Horses**

Trojan Horses are programs that secretly do things that you don't expect--like a screen saver that also secretly emails bank statements to a hacker. Trojan horses can get onto a computer the same way as viruses and worms do.

No single product can provide total security. Personal firewalls prevent hackers and some viruses from connecting to your PC, but complete protection requires the installation of anti-virus software and keeping it updated. A good anti-virus program can be configured to scan incoming and outgoing emails, downloaded files, and any floppy disks or CDs that are inserted into a PC.

“Personal Firewall Day is a wonderful example of the private sector banding together to enable even the least tech-savvy user to understand and implement safe and secure computing practices,” said Howard Schmidt, former White House cyber-security advisor, founder of the Global CSO Council. “These industry leaders demonstrate the kind of personal accountability we believe is needed from all computer users to raise the bar for Internet security. I hope everyone takes advantage of all the resources provided on the Personal Firewall Day Web site, and to share the link with all their friends.”

“The best advice I can give to a novice computer user is to seek out someone you trust who knows about computers and discuss the use of a personal firewall with them,” said Cooper. “If you’re already familiar with personal firewalls, double-check your computer against the information on [www.personalfirewallday.org](http://www.personalfirewallday.org).”

For more information, please visit [www.personalfirewallday.org](http://www.personalfirewallday.org).

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