

## Re: A question for the group

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- *From:* David Brown <[david@xx](mailto:david@xx)>
  - *Date:* 5 Jul 2006 09:42:49 +0200
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Luhan wrote:

Ken Smith wrote:

In article  
<1152058179.662058.129320@xx>,  
<smccaine@xxxxxxxx> wrote:

I've been lurking awhile and I needed to post this time for help. I believe that I have caught my computer dialing a number which I do not want it to dial. Is such a thing even possible?

It sure is. There are viruses that do this sort of thing. Unplug the phone line to the PC until you solve the problem.

If it is a Windows computer, use a different computer to download the latest anti-virus software and run it on the suspect computer. After you run the virus scan, restart the PC in safe mode and run it again. The restart it again and run it yet again.

If the anti-virus software never reports that it found a virus go buy a different one and try it. After the normal mode and safe mode scan, the 3rd scan should come up clean. It may then be safe to reconnect the phone line.

[...]

problem? Do I now need to build a box to defend my lame computer?

The box to do this isn't all that hard. All you need is a switch in series with the phone lines.

When I ran dialup, I had an LED indicator to tell when the computer grabbed the phone line and a switch to disconnect it. This happened

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most frequently while installing new software that decided to 'phone home' with information.

Viruses and Trojans do this stuff all the time. I now use Zone Alarm to protect my system on DSL.

Luhan

A real firewall/router will cost about \$30, and do a vastly better job of protecting your network or PC from trojans and other nasties. And your ISP should be able to virus-scan your emails for you – again, they will (should!) do a better job than a home system. There are certainly a few things a software firewall can do that a hardware one cannot, so it does no harm to have both, but the absolute rules in a hardware firewall are much harder to break, and being a "plug in and forget it" device, you don't need continuous updating.