

## *I.T. Security, the simple explanation*

As an I.T. professional, I hear daily people bemoan they don't know anything about how their pc works let alone trying to secure it. So let's break this whole computer security thing down into simple terms.

Your pc is similar to your home: in your home you have different rooms with different items. In the kitchen there are dishes, in the bedroom there are clothes, etc. You can freely move these items around from room to room or even throw them out.

Your pc is a series of folders that contain different items. Some folders house pictures, some music, some documents, and others have the files the pc needs to operate. You can delete them at will as well.

With me so far?

Okay so how do you access these rooms in your home? Depending on where you live, you probably go through a couple of doors before you set foot in the home. At my home, first there is a gate that gets you into the yard. Then there's the screen door and finally the front door. So in essence, you have to get through 3 different doors before you're in my home. In the security world, this is called defense in layers.

In your home, you secure all of your doors because you know that intruders won't always use the front door. Access to your computer needs to be the same way.

You need to have those different layers of defense & secure all possible entry points. In a home those are called doors, gates, etc. In the pc world, those are called firewalls, anti-virus, anti-spam, and passwords to name a few.

For your pc, a firewall is like a security door that you have to be buzzed through. When someone arrives, they press the buzzer, someone on the other side verifies who it is and then lets them in. Firewalls do this electronically via rules and validation. (this is a very, very simplistic view).

Anti-virus can be likened to an alarm system in your home. It's constantly monitoring for anything suspicious and will sound an alert when it finds something.

Passwords are like keys to your home; without a key, you can't open the door and access the files. While you can technically get into a house without a key, it's much easier with one. A password for your pc, online accounts, files, etc is what lets you access your files and keeps others out. Daily, I hear people complain about using a password, but do you complain about unlocking the doors to your home to get in? Even in your own home, you have to go through security to get in. That's just how it is.

Your passwords need to be things that only you know, easy to remember, but yet difficult to figure out. Tough to do right? Not always...You can use a phrase or something to help you remember; I hate passwords is easy to remember, although that maybe easy to figure out.

You don't have to be a pc genius to protect your information, just have to know a little bit of how it all works together.