



ResNet @ *Saint Mary's College*

Protect Your Computer from Viruses!

<http://www.saintmarys.edu/virus>

What Is A Virus?

A virus is a computer program that replicates itself by modifying system or application software and then traveling from computer to computer, via disks or a network. Some older viruses are harmless, but newer viruses can erase files saved on your hard drive, slow down your computer, prevent your computer from starting up, e-mail files from your computer to strangers, crash e-mail servers or cause other problems to a network (like the one we have at Saint Mary's), and do other kinds of damage. You can protect your computer against most types of viruses by installing virus protection software.

How Can You Get A Virus?

- If you download software or other files from the Internet, it may contain viruses that will infect your computer when you run the program.
- If you do not keep your computer current with the latest operating system and software updates but are connected to a network or to the Internet, your computer may be vulnerable to viruses that can infect your computer without your knowledge (examples include the Lovesan/Blaster, Welchia/Nachi, and Sasser worms).
- If you click on unknown or suspicious links in instant messaging program profiles or messages, you may unknowingly be downloading a virus that will infect your computer (examples include the Realphx and Best Friends viruses).
- If you share files using shared network drives or other file servers, you may end up downloading an infected file.
- If you receive an infected e-mail message and you open the message and/or attachment, your computer may become infected with a virus (examples include the LoveLetter, SirCam, and Klez viruses).
- If you use Microsoft Word or Excel on your computer, your computer can become infected with a "macro virus" when you open an infected document.

What Happens If My Computer Gets A Virus?

- If your computer gets a virus, you are responsible for cleaning the virus off your computer. Instructions for removing many current viruses are available on the ResNet web site at <http://www.saintmarys.edu/resnet> so you can clean your computer immediately without the assistance of an RCC.
- Saint Mary's College and Information Technology are not responsible for any loss of data or other damage caused by a computer virus. You are responsible for installing

and keeping the virus protection software on your computer up-to-date as well as backing up your personal files on a regular basis. (Your personal network drive is backed up automatically every night by Information Technology, though.)

- If your computer gets a virus that is self-spreading, either via e-mail or over the network in some fashion, Information Technology will block Internet access from your computer until the computer has been cleaned and a RCC has witnessed a scan for viruses on your computer coming up clean.
- If your computer is suspected of having a virus because it is displaying symptoms of infection that can be traced, Information Technology will block Internet access from your computer until the computer has been examined and/or cleaned and an RCC has witnessed a scan for viruses on your computer coming up clean.
- If you have installed the Windows operating system on an Apple computer, that computer is just as vulnerable to viruses as any other computer running Windows. Make sure that you take the same precautions as Windows users to protect your computer – keeping your version of Windows up-to-date with Windows Update and installing and keeping your Windows virus protection software up-to-date (in addition to your Mac OS X virus protection software).

How Can I Protect My Computer Against Viruses?

In a networked environment such as Saint Mary's College (including ResNet), the ease with which a virus can spread from computer to computer is greatly multiplied, as is its potential for damage. Instead of affecting just your machine, a virus could spread to hundreds of computers all over campus, and could even bring down our campus network. Recognizing this threat, the College has decided to provide antivirus software *free of cost* to all students, faculty, and staff for their personal computers. This software can be downloaded from the campus network and installed on your computer. **Any student who connects her computer to the Saint Mary's network via ResNet must install virus protection software and keep it up to date.** Failure to have current antivirus protection on your computer will result in the loss of ResNet access privileges.

The software is available for both Macintosh and Windows computers. Instructions for installing virus protection software on your personal Macintosh or Windows computer connected to ResNet can be found at:

<http://www.saintmarys.edu/virus>

Virus Hoaxes

There are a lot of viruses out there. And then there are some viruses that aren't really out there at all. There are many e-mail messages floating around the Internet that claim to be viruses and are nothing more than hoaxes. The problem with these messages is that people keep forwarding the messages to all their friends, and the message ends up spreading as if it was a virus. If you receive an e-mail that warns you of a virus and it tells you to forward the message to everyone you know, check it out - it may be a hoax! To learn if a virus warning is a hoax or not, consult the list of virus hoaxes located at <http://vil.mcafee.com/hoax.asp> or <http://www.vmyths.com/>.