



Tips, January, 2013

JAVA???? Homeland Security wants me to do WHAT??

No doubt you've seen news reports or a post on your social network alerting you to concerns about something called "Java" that could cause trouble on your computer. If you aren't sure what's happening or need a straight forward explanation for a friend or loved one, here's an overview to help you sort this out:

What is Java? It is an internal program that is used to run websites and programs. It is used by many, many computer users, both on the PC and Mac operating systems. It's also used by many other kinds of technology, from smartphones to parking meters to game systems.

Where and why is it found on my computer? It was likely installed by the manufacturer. If you have automatic updates for Java on Windows turned on (it's called Java Auto Update), it's updating itself. To configure Auto Update, you will need to open your Java program. For most Windows users it is found within the Control Panel. Java should update itself automatically for Mac users as well.

What is the problem? There is a "hole," or vulnerability, in Java 7 unless you install the latest patch. There are toolkits allowing someone to gain control of your computer by leveraging the hole in Java if you should visit an infected or compromised website.

Who discovered a problem? The week of January 7, 2013, the US Department of Homeland Security issued a warning to Americans, recommending we temporarily disable Java on our computers to minimize the opportunity for a hacker to leverage vulnerabilities and gain control of our computers.

How do I fix it? First, don't freak out! ☺ Despite the urgency of the warning, it's unlikely you've been infected if you are running security software, and haven't visited the "wrong" kind of websites. We recommend Norton – it protects against this vulnerability. Update your Java to get the patch available to fix the issue. Visit the [Oracle Java site](#) to learn if you have the latest version. Click the "Do I have Java?" link to determine which version you have. The latest version with a patch to address this vulnerability is 7.11. If you still wish to disable Java as the DHS recommends, you can do so. We can help you do so, or visit your browsers web site for instructions.

Anything else? Just be sure you have your automatic updates turned on for Windows and are running them. Also you have to keep your anti-virus up to date, and spend a little money for a good quality anti-virus! The free programs often don't provide the protection your data and PC need to stay safe!

If you have any questions at all, please call us here **704-482-0057** and one of our friendly techs will help you!!!