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The Simple Security Team**

Simple Security

**Knowing what you need to know to keep you and your
electronic companions safe and secure.**

Foreword

The personal computer, the Internet, email, mobile phones and other smart devices are quite complex and capable. As we come to depend more on these devices the opportunity for simple mistakes leading to personal loss increase. Understanding the possible pitfalls and what to do about them and why can quickly and easily reduce our vulnerability.

There are a lot of books and other guides available covering the topics discussed here. This is our attempt to provide the essential information in a straightforward way, based on practical experience of introducing methods and equipment to individuals of all skill levels in the home and workplace.

So, get away from the computer for a while, get a nice drink of something, sit down in a comfortable chair and read.

The Simple Security Team

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1 Simple Security

Some people are lucky. They live in a quiet street, know their neighbours, don't lock their doors and shop locally. Driving down the empty roads is a pleasure and their bank and tax office are efficient and helpful.

Many of us aren't so lucky. We have busy and increasingly complex lives. Keeping in touch with friends and colleagues over long distances is a daily necessity. We are worried about our personal and financial security and the possible random dangers of everyday life.

Everybody, though, needs to be aware of possible hazards. Most people these days will wear a seatbelt when in a car, even for short trips on quiet roads. The same precautionary approach needs to be taken with other aspects of personal security. This needn't interfere unduly with pursuing our everyday lives.

The communications revolution allows us to manage many elements of our lives in novel ways. Whatever types of new technology you have adopted, you need to know how to control it, and how to put the seatbelts on. That is what this book is about.

Our main focus will be on the personal computer, desktop or laptop. Many of the points discussed will also be relevant to other devices, including hand held computers, smart mobile phones, even portable music players and other multi-media devices.

Describing new things is always a problem, often leading to the excessive use of jargon. Similarly, unwarranted assumptions of knowledge and experience possessed by the reader lead to further difficulty.

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In this book we aim to speak plain English. While hoping to provide clear guidance to the non-technical reader, we intend this book to provide a concise reminder for everyone. No specific technical knowledge is assumed, though we should be comprehensive enough to be of interest to more experienced readers.

A great many people use the Internet, most using email to some degree. This provides the most likely opportunity for unwanted intrusion and will provide the bulk of our discussion. Other issues which are often overlooked, such as personal health and physical security, will also be covered.

Note that we don't intend to be a step-by-step guide. Most readers will be using Microsoft Windows, but there are numerous differences in the several versions of this in current use. This guide is intended to be generic, the points raised being applicable to various devices and systems. Where relevant we'll discuss any issues specific to different operating systems (Windows, MacOS, Linux) or devices (pc, pda, mobile etc.).

Ideally you'd read through the book first, then attend to each section in detail. Numbered references in the text refer to the entries in the bibliography found after Chapter 15. Note that a version of the bibliography with live links should be available for download as an Adobe Acrobat (.pdf) document or on the web page at our online retailers. You should be able to have this document open on your computer when looking up the references, just click through to the relevant website.

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You will also probably find it helpful to use a search engine to look up terms of interest as you go along. Apart from the well known Google (<http://www.google.com/>) and the popular portal Yahoo (<http://www.yahoo.com/>), a good and slightly different alternative is Clusty (<http://clusty.com/>). This is what is known as a meta-search engine, in that it uses other search engines to gather results and then groups them into related clusters. Another large and popular site is Ask Jeeves (<http://www.ask.com/>), which works in a similar way.

For online reference there is also the modern source of all knowledge, Wikipedia (<http://www.wikipedia.org/>), the online encyclopedia. This is entirely written by its users and to the surprise of many commentators is in general both reliable and readable. You may like to look up some entries in any special field of knowledge that you may have. If you find that the entry is wrong or deficient, change it! A number of references in our bibliography are Wikipedia entries.

Now go on to the check-list in the next section. When you are happy that you have attended to each item, tick off the question mark (?).

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