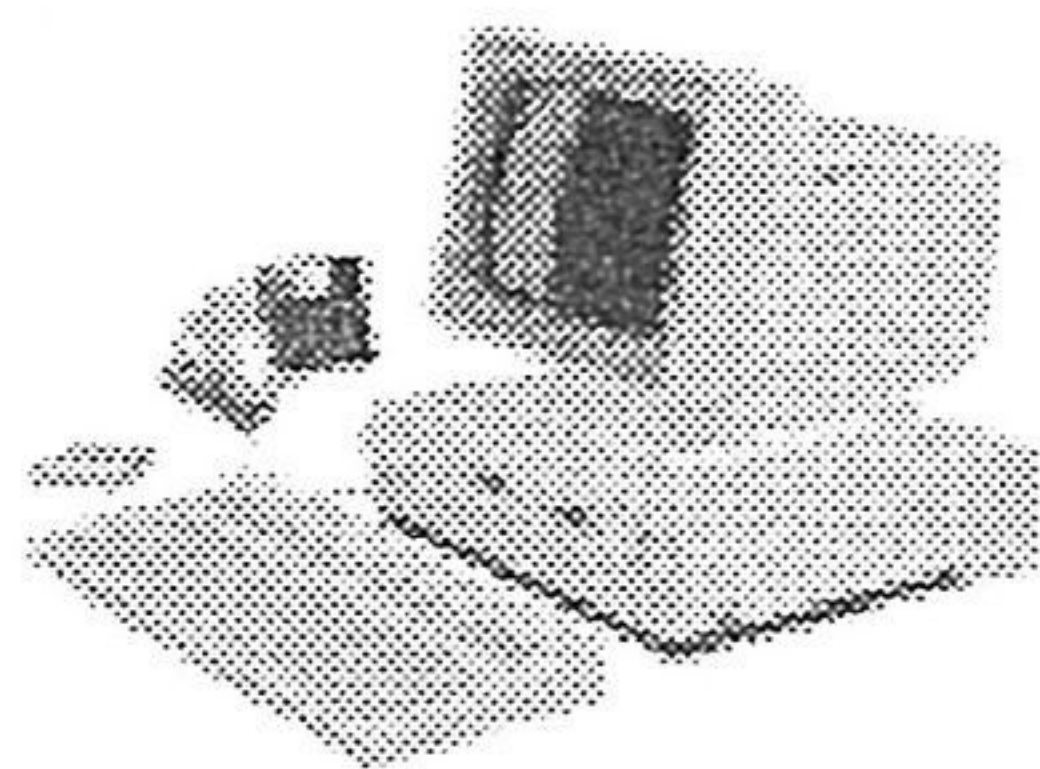# Computer Tips

This month I thought we would explore the top free utilities that we are using here at Debug Computers that home users may find useful. The internet is full of free things, however many come with spyware or adaware which are the bane of home users, especially those on dialup connections. So, with no further ado, here are the best free programs as far as we are concerned.

The first and possibly best of the lot is AVG anti-virus located at www.grisoft.com. This program is an excellent anti virus solution. It updates for free and has no charges. Simply look for the free edition link and download the main program. Install it and update it and you are protected from the latest viri. We have found that this program has discovered viri that even Norton and Macafee have not detected. It is a must have for anyone that connects to the internet. If you have Norton or MacAfee already installed, we remind you to uninstall them before installing any new antivirus solutions.

Next we have Spybot search and destroy. This handy tool eliminates spyware, malware and ad ware, all things that clog up your system and internet connections. You will find it at security.kolla.de. Like AVG, simply download the program, install it and update it then run a check on your system. See if you can beat our current record of 937 active items of spy ware. Not that it is a good record to beat. Spybot does many things; it kills upwards of 14000 known spy ware programs. It immunises against further attacks. It even can stop some of the current viri in their tracks. Update at least once a month and run a scan once a month and you will find that your computer will run more efficiently.

Tweakui is a fantastic tool for Windows 95, windows 98se and windows me. It allows you to change many settings in windows to configure the operating system to how you like it. It is available at www.microsoft.com/ ntworkstation/downloads/ powertoys/networking/ nttweakui.asp. After install you will find a new option in your control panel called TweakUi. Have a look through its settings and feel free to configure your system. There are privacy settings, logon settings, almost anything you might like. If you are using Windows XP you can find a similar tool called windows power tools at www.microsoft.com/windowsxp/ pro/downloads/ powertoys.asp. These programs are written by Microsoft and do not install any other junk into your computer. Beware any other programs that promise the same benefits but want to advertise to you while you tweak your machine. These Microsoft programs will do almost everything you would like, with no advertising or spy ware.

Adobe Acrobat reader is essential for anyone who needs to read .PDF files. As these files are becoming the way to move documents across the internet. You can download it at http://www.adobe.com. Install it and you will be able to read anything that is a .PDF file. Adobe has offered this program for a long time and the latest version is Adobe Acrobat reader 6. It is free and essential for looking around the web.

Last but not least, the infamous free browsers. Microsoft's latest is Internet Explorer 6. If you are on dialup, the download is long!!!! However, you can find it on disk at a variety of spots. The most common are friends, or a friendly computer shop. We are no longer recommending Netscape as AOL bought the company and has destroyed Netscape. It takes longer to open, longer to connect and only lets you browse what AOL wants you to look at. If you enjoyed Netscape, try Mozilla or some of the other Mozilla based browsers. They can be agreeable, but there is limited support and are not recommended for new or inexperienced users.

Have a great month and we hope you enjoy some of these free programs. Until next time, happy computing.

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