

**Even software developers are at risk from computer viruses:
NOD32 keeps Mentor Software out of harm's way**

Keeping computers free of viruses and other malware is vital for all businesses, large and small. And no type of business is exempt from threats from cyberspace. Because of their line of work, software development companies may be more vigilant than other types of businesses, but they are no less vulnerable.

Computer security is a primary concern of Norm Olsen, founder and principal of Mentor Software Inc., a software development company in Lakewood, Colo. Olsen specializes in map projection software for AutoCAD users, which allows them to represent the three-dimensional curved surface of the earth on a two-dimensional plane.

ONE MAN, ONE COMPUTER

A self-described “independent one-man band,” Olsen runs his business on a single laptop computer. He puts that machine through its paces with some heavy-duty programs – Microsoft Visual Studio and AutoCAD. They have to be running at the same time so that he can write and test his software.

Olsen had been careful to keep his laptop protected by anti-virus software because he needs it to be secure and running optimally at all times. Any downtime cuts into his bottom line. He wasn't happy that his anti-virus package, which demanded 200 MB of RAM, was slowing him down at times. But with his “if it ain't broke don't fix it” attitude, he was willing to tolerate it, since it had been doing the job for more than a year.

That is, until he downloaded the newest update and the machine started crashing nonstop. Olsen didn't have time to call the vendor's customer support and sit on hold. Instead he called his friend and colleague Monte Robertson, whose company Software Security Solutions (SSS) is in the same building as Mentor Software. Robertson directed him to the SSS web site and suggested downloading NOD32 Anti-Virus.

SAFER, FASTER, BETTER

Olsen took Robertson's advice and now is protected by NOD32, a program developed by Bratislava, Slovakia-based ESET. Unlike most anti-virus software, NOD32's technology enables it to protect against new and unknown viruses as well as those already in circulation. Therefore there's no “risk window” that exists for users waiting for their vendor to provide a new fix for a new virus. In 2007, NOD32 was named “Best Antivirus Product of 2007” by independent research firm AV-Comparatives.

Being an undiscovered brand makes NOD32 a better anti-virus product, Robertson says. “Hackers are getting the latest version of the market leaders to test against.

Then they release their malware onto the Internet. One of the advantages of using a lesser known product is that hackers can't test against all of them."

Besides feeling safe from viruses, Olsen notices how smoothly his laptop runs now. A problem he had experienced with the previous anti-virus software was "swapping." That's the tendency for any operating system to switch programs to the hard disk when it runs low on RAM, which can happen when running demanding development software like Olsen does. "Once you hit that threshold everything slows down to a crawl," he says. "NOD32's footprint is half of what I had before both in terms of memory and computer time."

Updates are fast, too – five seconds compared to a minute or two with his previous program, he says.

That's another reason Robertson is a NOD32 advocate. "Performance is very important to developers," he says. "If we're able to make a developer's machine, which is highly resource intensive, more efficient, we can make anyone's machine more efficient."

GOOD PRODUCT, GOOD PRICE, GOOD HEALTH

At \$39.99 for the first year, \$27.99 per year after that, NOD32 costs about the same as the other anti-virus programs Olsen has tried over the years. So he doesn't measure return on investment in dollars but in qualitative terms. "I am more productive, because it uses half the resources that any other brand did," he says.

He also doesn't worry about his machine crashing. Although he depends exclusively on his laptop, that's not for lack of other PCs in his office. One is gathering dust due to damage inflicted by an anti-virus program, he says. "I got a hard disk error in the middle of the registry so Windows won't come up anymore. When I get a few hours I'll reinstall the operating system."

Olsen says it's quality software like NOD32 that keeps him in good health, too. When he responded to a recent blood drive he was turned away. "My blood pressure was too low to give blood."