

# The Computer Support Newsletter

December 2004

<http://msa.ars.usda.gov/computerhelp>

email news: [sntucker@msa-stoneville.ars.usda.gov](mailto:sntucker@msa-stoneville.ars.usda.gov)

## Computer Support Newsletter Audience

A note to our many readers..... This newsletter is published mainly to inform MSA employees of Information Technology (IT) news and happenings. Much of the newsletter will relate to the local user base. If you are NOT at Stoneville, some of the contained items may not be relevant to you.

### INSIDE THIS ISSUE

- [Protecting Portable Devices](#)
- [Free Computer Resources](#)
- [Agency News](#)
- [Tips / Tricks](#)

### Protecting Portable Devices

Many computer users, especially those who travel for business, rely on laptops and PDAs because they are small and easily transported. While these characteristics make them popular and convenient, they also make them an ideal target for thieves. If a thief steals your laptop or PDA, the most obvious loss is the machine itself. However, if the thief is able to access the information on the computer or PDA, all of the information stored on the device is at risk, as well as any additional information that could be accessed as a result of the data stored on the device. Make sure to secure your portable devices to protect both the machine and the information it contains.

How can you protect your laptop or PDA?

- Password-protect your computer - In the process of getting to the information on your portable device, you probably encounter multiple prompts for passwords. Take advantage of this security. Don't choose options that allow your computer to remember passwords, don't choose passwords that thieves could easily guess, and use different passwords for different programs.
- When traveling keep your laptop or PDA with you at all times
- Downplay your laptop or PDA - There is no need to advertise to thieves that you have a laptop or PDA. Avoid using your portable device in public areas, and consider non-traditional bags for carrying your laptop.
- Consider an alarm or lock - Many companies sell alarms or locks that you can use to protect or secure your laptop.
- Back up your files - Make sure to back up any data you have on your computer onto a CD-ROM, DVD-ROM, or network. Not only will this ensure that you will still have access to the information if

your device is stolen, but it could help you identify exactly which information a thief may be able to access. You may be able to take measures to reduce the amount of damage that exposure could cause.

- Install and maintain anti-virus software - Protect laptops and PDAs from viruses the same way you protect your desktop computer. Make sure to keep your virus definitions up to date (see Understanding Anti-Virus Software for more information).

### Free Computer Resources

Despite our many warnings concerning viruses, malware and spyware, a number of you are still managing to become infected or perhaps you have a kid at home that manages to keep your home computer infected. Here's steps to help clean up an infected computer and a few available FREE tools.

Try to go through this in the order listed.

1. Go into add / remove programs and remove any programs that should not be installed. Often Spyware will be listed there.
2. Scan for viruses. You can access Computer Associates

*This newsletter is published by the ARS-USDA Mid-South Area Computer Support Staff. If you have news items, updates, corrections, or questions, please contact us via our email address or web site.*

# The Computer Support Newsletter

December 2004

<http://msa.ars.usda.gov/computerhelp>

email news: [sntucker@msa-stoneville.ars.usda.gov](mailto:sntucker@msa-stoneville.ars.usda.gov)

On-line Virus scanner for free at:  
<http://www3.ca.com/securityadvisor/virusinfo/scan.aspx>

It will prompt you to load a control and then scan the PC (this may take :30 to an hour).

3. If any viruses are found, print out or write down the names.

4. Many removal tools can be found at:

<http://www3.ca.com/securityadvisor/newsinfo/collateral.aspx?CID=40387>

If these fail, the malware may have to be extricated manually or the machine reloaded.

## Additional Resources:

❖ Free AntiVirus software (uninstall the old first):

<http://free.grisoft.com/freeweb.php/doc/2/>

❖ Freeware Spyware remover:

<http://www.spybot.info/en/mirrors/index.html>

download from download.com, install, update, immunize, scan the PC for Spyware and remove what it finds

❖ Free personal Firewall Software:

[http://www.zonelabs.com/store/content/company/products/znalm/freeDownload.jsp?lid=staticcomp\\_za](http://www.zonelabs.com/store/content/company/products/znalm/freeDownload.jsp?lid=staticcomp_za)  
Download and install accepting the defaults (the basic free version is sufficient).

## Agency News

### Informs Replacement Software

ARS will provide a demonstration of the replacement software for Informs, FormFinder for the Web, via webcast on Tuesday, December 7, 2004, at 10:00 a.m. CST.

Computer contacts or LAOs for each location was notified of the webcast and should set up a central location for those interested in viewing.

Stoneville area employees can view the webcast in the 1<sup>st</sup> floor conference room of Bldg. 1.

### New MSA Website

On October 15, 2004 the ARS Web site was updated to include the USDA directed Web Site Design. At the same time, ARS also introduced integrated-yet-unique web sites for each unit in ARS. Take a look at the new websites:

ARS: <http://www.ars.usda.gov>

MSA:  
[http://www.ars.usda.gov/main/site\\_main.htm?modecode=64-00-00-00](http://www.ars.usda.gov/main/site_main.htm?modecode=64-00-00-00)

MSA locations and units can be found by clicking on the People and Places tabs on the navigational bar and accessing appropriate location.

## Coming Improvements:

- More user friendly web addresses
- Dreamweaver Interface (webediting)
- Scientist Homepages
- Design Templates for ARS associated sites

## e-Authentication

Back in July, the Department launched its e-Authentication initiative which required all ARS employees to complete a registration process via a website that authenticates who you are based on certain data that is validated against the National Finance Center data.

A lot of MSA employees still have not completed registering. Emails went out to those still needing to eAuthenticate back in November.

**If you have not successfully registered for eAuthentication or if you are a new employee in the MSA, please complete the process immediately.**

The following link provides more specific information and instructions on eAuthenticating.  
[eAuthentication Instructions](#)

For technical assistance, please contact the Department's eAuthentication Help Desk at [eAuthHelpDesk@usda.gov](mailto:eAuthHelpDesk@usda.gov)

# The Computer Support Newsletter

December 2004

<http://msa.ars.usda.gov/computerhelp>

email news: [sntucker@msa-stoneville.ars.usda.gov](mailto:sntucker@msa-stoneville.ars.usda.gov)

For more information about the registration process, please contact Sonja Tucker at 662-686-5305 or email [sntucker@ars.usda.gov](mailto:sntucker@ars.usda.gov).

## Tips and Tricks

### Windows XP - Create a Password Reset Disk

If you're running Windows XP Professional as a local user in a workgroup environment, you can create a password reset disk to log on to your computer when you forget your password.

#### To create the disk

1. Click Start, Control Panel, and then click User Accounts.
2. Click your account name.
3. Under Related Tasks, click Prevent a forgotten password.
4. Follow the directions in the Forgotten Password Wizard to create a password reset disk.

**Important:** Store the disk in a secure location, because anyone using it can access your local user account.

### Groupwise 6.02 Stoneville Users Vacation Rule

Here's one neat way (there are lots of ways, some good, some bad, some indifferent; this is one of the good ways) to set up an effective [GroupWise vacation rule](#).

### Microsoft Word 2003—Editing Restrictions

Lock down portions of Word documents to prevent anyone from editing sections they are not authorized to edit. Choose to allow others to make changes with revisions marks, or make the entire document read-only. Click [here](#) to find out how.

### Microsoft Excel – Change Column Width and Row Height

Now that PCMS and Discoverer has moved to the web, your reports are being exported to MS Excel. Do you need to know how to make a cell smaller or larger, wider or narrower? Click [here](#) to find out how.

### Microsoft Power Point- Adding Clip Art to a Presentation

You may enjoy adding some type of clip art to your presentations. It's a great way to energize the audience by coupling a visual cue with the action items. The **Clip Art** task pane lets presenters search for clips on everything from apples to zebras. Click [here](#) to find out how.

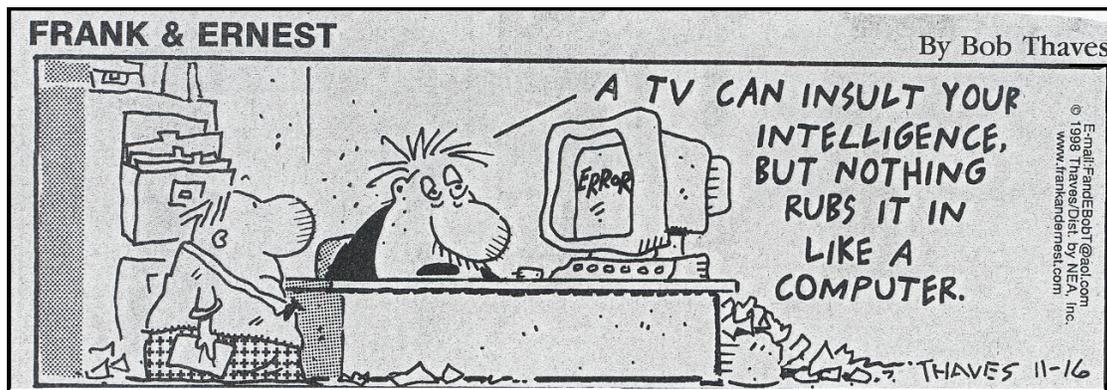
## **NEW** Available Now

Copies of Microsoft Office 2003 were mailed to all MSA locations for administrative personnel on November 19, 2004. If you are part of your unit's administrative staff and your MS Office software has not been upgraded, contact your unit's computer support personnel and request the upgrade.

### Comments and Contacts:

Email your comments to:

[sntucker@msa-stoneville.ars.usda.gov](mailto:sntucker@msa-stoneville.ars.usda.gov)



This newsletter is published by the ARS-USDA Mid-South Area Computer Support Staff. If you have news items, updates, corrections, or questions, please contact us via our email address or web site.