## TECHVIEWS

# Taking on windows security

**AHMED ASHIFUL HAQUE**

ENSURING security on your computer that runs Windows is a delicate and complicated business. The ever-menacing threats of viruses, spyware, phishing is always on the rise. Your valuable data is always at risk. So, how do you keep yourself safe? Here's a short rundown of some of the things you'll need to keep an eye on to keep your computer safer.

By learning as much as you can about computer and network security and assessing how your system is at risk you will greatly improve your odds of staying secure. For example, if your PC is never connected to the internet or never used by anyone other than you, it is obviously safer than a PC used by everyone in the household, used for downloading files and browsing.

Regardless of the intended use, the three basic keys are to install anti-virus software (and keep it up to date), never open files from sources you don't know and keep your system properly patched against known vulnerabilities.

Beyond that, there are a few

fies and stops information that comes from a dangerous location or seems suspicious.

When you set up your firewall correctly, hackers searching for vulnerable computers can't detect your computer.

Three basic types of firewalls are available. The first step is to determine which one is best for you. Your options include: software firewalls, hardware and wireless routers.
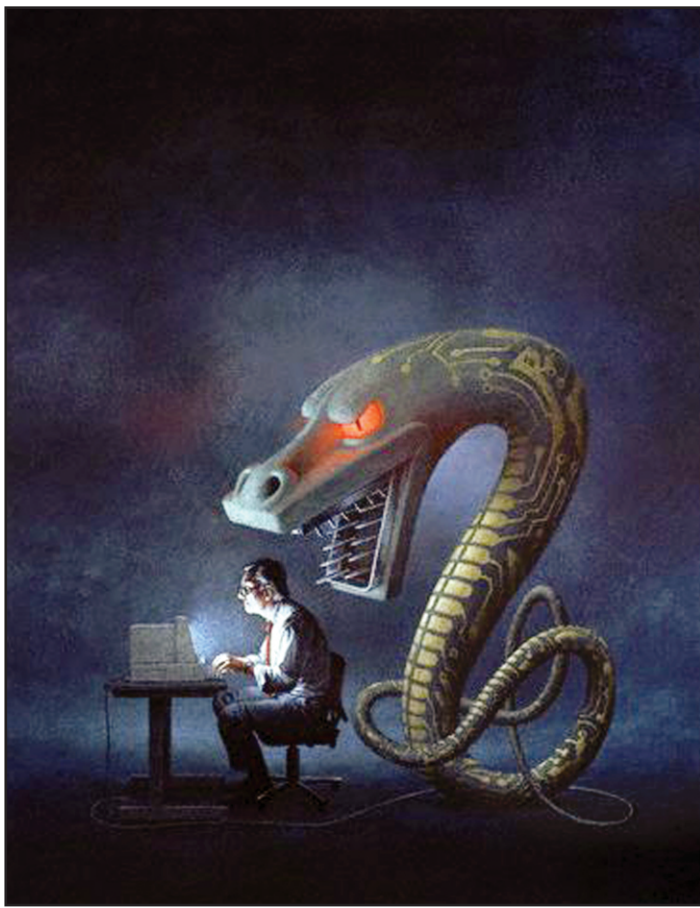
**Turn on Automatic Updates in Windows XP**

To help protect your computer from the latest internet threats, it's important to install new security updates as soon as they become available. The easiest way to do this is to turn on Automatic Updates and use the recommended setting, which downloads recommended updates and installs them on a schedule you set.

**Use Firefox**

Use Firefox or Opera. Instead of using Internet Explorer with all its vulnerabilities, both Firefox and Opera are much faster, secure and stable.

**Use Anti-Virus Software**

Viruses can wreak havoc on your





**Eliminate security risks: use your personal login!**

other precautions one can take to try to ensure the security of their computer.

**Use a firewall**

On the Internet, hackers often use malicious codeviruses, worms, and Trojansto try to find unprotected computers. While some attacks are just nuisances that may play simple pranks, others are created with malicious intent. These more severe strains may attempt to delete information from your computer, crash it, or even steal personal information, such as passwords or credit card numbers.

Fortunately, you can reduce your risk of infection by using a firewall. A firewall works by examining information coming from and going to the Internet. It identi-

computer. Protect yourself by using antivirus software. Nothing can guarantee the security of your computer 100 percent. But you can still continue to improve your computer's security and decrease the possibility of infection by using a firewall, keeping your system up-to-date, maintaining a current antivirus software subscription, and following a few common practices.
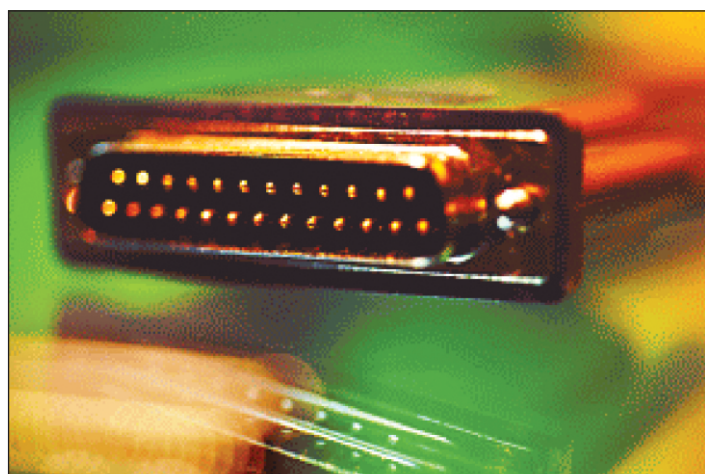
**Use Anti-Spyware and Adware software**

Spyware is software that displays advertisements (called adware) or tracks personal or sensitive information, even access your computer. Protect your computer by using anti-spyware and adware software. Spyware is a general term used

to describe software that performs certain behaviors such as advertising, collecting personal information, or changing the configuration of your computer, generally without appropriately obtaining your consent first.

These programs can change your Web browser's home page or search page, or add additional components to your browser you don't need or want. These programs also make it very difficult for you to change your settings back to the way you originally had them.

There are a number of ways spyware or other unwanted software can get on your computer. A common trick is to covertly install the software during the installation of other software you want such as a music or video file sharing pro-

gram.

The spread of spyware has led to the development of an entire anti-spyware industry. Its prod-

ucts remove or disable existing spyware on the computers they are installed on and prevent its installation.

**Be careful what you click on**

Often, attackers must entice you to open an email attachment or visit their Web site in order to attack your computer. If you open the attachment or visit their site, malicious code is executed on your computer. To protect your computer, be careful what you click on.

**Use limited accounts to secure your Windows XP**

Windows XP provides two different types of user accounts: limited and administrator. Administrator accounts have unlimited access to the computer, while limited accounts have some restrictions. One significant difference between limited and administrator accounts is the ease with which both types of users can download and install programs.

Since it's easy for you to download and install programs while using an administrator account, it's also easier for attackers to download and install programs to your computer without your knowledge. If an attacker entices you to visit their Web site and you're using an administrator account, the attacker may be able to put programs on your computer that could delete your files, spy on your activity, use your computer to attack others, and more.

In contrast, if you're using a limited account when you visit an attacker's Web site, it's less likely the attacker will be able to download and install the program or file that's necessary to infect your computer.

All these steps would greatly help in making your computer more secure, but there is always the risk of the worse for happening: a fatal hard-disk crash or a virus erasing all your date. And that's why it's very important to backup what's important to you. No matter what, remember to always back up your data!

## TECHFOCUS

### Media Centre PC
# Craze of new generation

**EDWARD APURBA SINGHA**

CHRONOLOGICAL advancement of computer technology dramatically changes the experience of personal entertainment. Nowadays it is easy to dream to become a director or a music composer at home with the blessing of an amazing device commonly known as Media Centre PC.

Media Centre PC creates a studio like environment where people enjoy music, edit videos and photos, capture favourite TV programs, watch HDTV, play games, surf the web, and other exciting tasks.
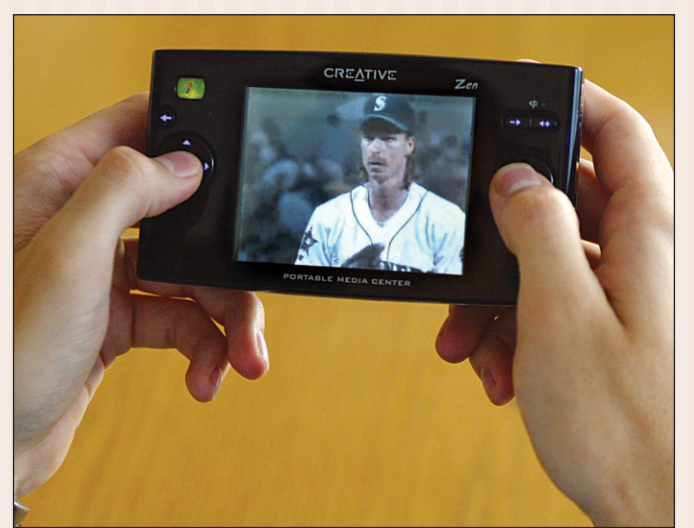
By adding some extra components and upgrading the existing capability it is possible to turn a general PC into amazing entertainment device formally known as Media Centre PC.

On the other hand, you can purchase a completely new media centre PC from particular manufacturer. Huge storage is the primary requirement for the smooth operation of a media centre PC. If we want to record HDTV programs or high quality videos you must consider 400-to-500 gigabyte disk space. In addition to this for realistic sound a surround sound system combined with a 24-bit sound card is mandatory. For TV reception you need a TV tuner, preferably with DVR capability so you can record programs. A PC AM/FM radio receiver enables you to tunes different radio stations.

Media centre PCs typically come with all of the basic inputs and outputs you'd find on an A/V receiver, including Composite, S-video and Component Video. It'll also have more PC-centric connections like VGA, DVI or HDMI. Media Centre PC can only support over-the-air digital or high-definition signals -- free signals that you receive via antenna. If you receive digital or HD programme through a set-to box, you can still watch it, but you're going to be watching it in standard TV quality.

Media Centre PC supports at least 5.1-channel and probably up to 7.1-channel surround in a variety of formats

such as DTS, Dolby Digital etc. To browse the web and download contents you need a broadband connection such as DSL or Cable modem. The procedure is same as regular PC. The Media Centre PC displays a program guide for your TV. It's a free service that updates daily via your Internet connection. Microsoft downloads program listings from TV service provider for up to 14 days out.

To synchronize all these sort of activities media centre software comes into reality. Microsoft unveils the media centre edition of its Windows XP operating system. It is a complete package comprising

ifferent utilities. Other media centre type software including Meedio Pro, Sage TV, Inter Video Home Theatre or Beyond TV with Beyond Media that lets you connect home theatre accessories to your computer and control it all through a single interface.

Technological revolution ensures mobility in human life. Media Centre PC also considers this phenomenon. As a result portable version of Media Centre PC is currently available. Using Windows Media Player 10, you can transfer files from a personal computer to a Portable Media Centre (PMC) through USB 2.0 cable. Portable Media Centres can also play premium downloaded digital music and video from various online services. It should me mentioned, however, that DVDs you own cannot be transferred to the device because of the copyright restrictions.
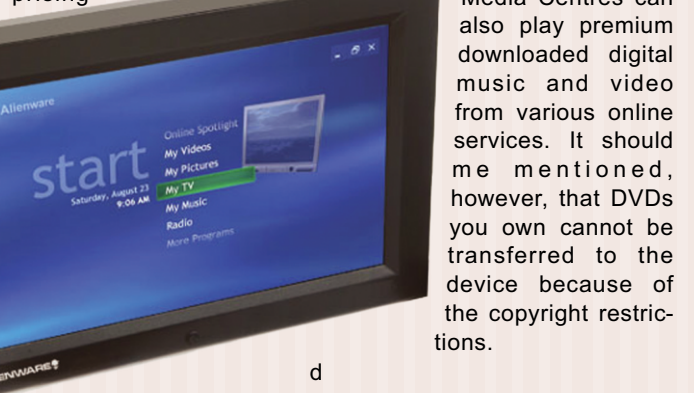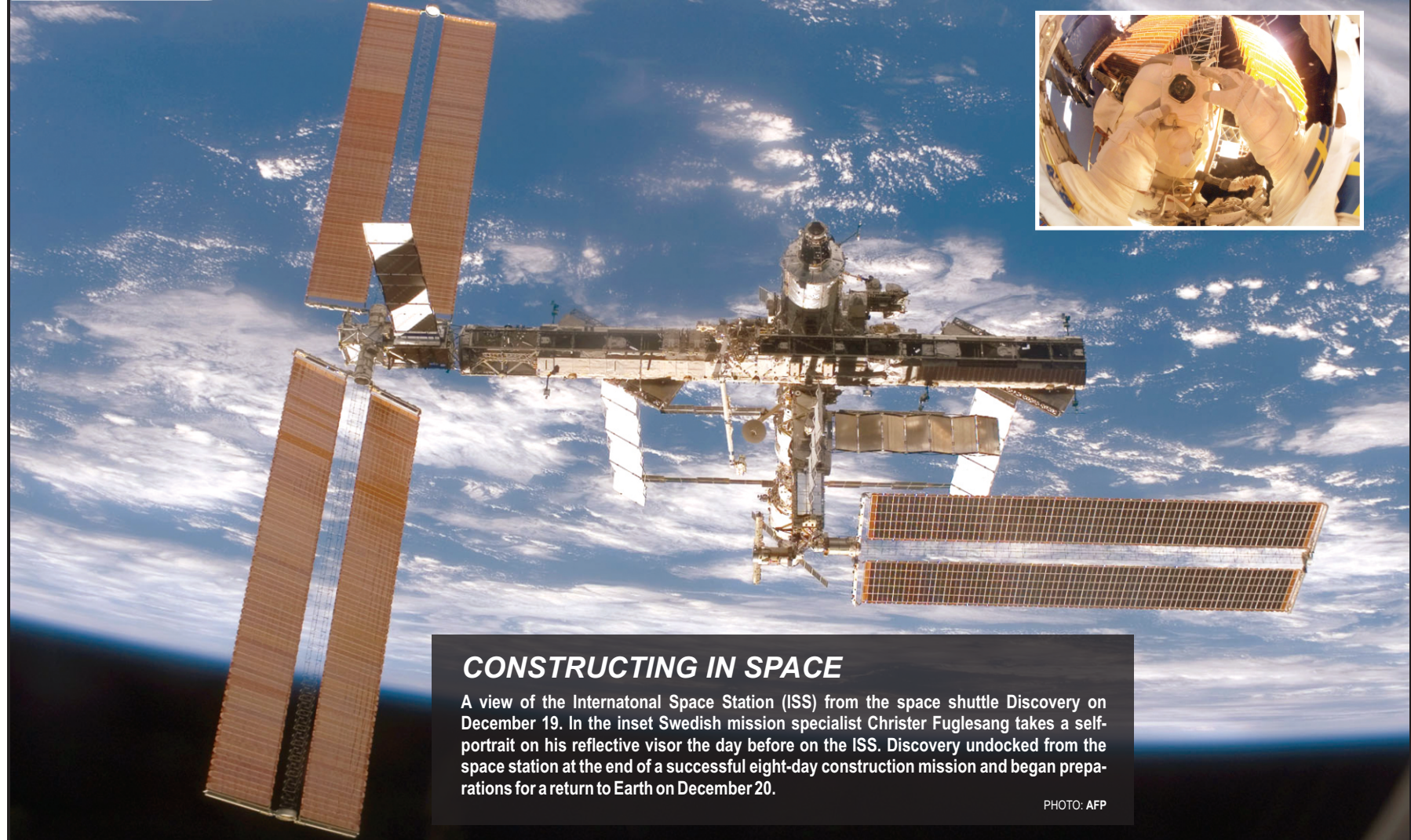






## PHOTOTECH



### CONSTRUCTING IN SPACE

A view of the Internatonal Space Station (ISS) from the space shuttle Discovery on December 19. In the inset Swedish mission specialist Christer Fuglesang takes a self-portrait on his reflective visor the day before on the ISS. Discovery undocked from the space station at the end of a successful eight-day construction mission and began preparations for a return to Earth on December 20.

PHOTO: **AFP**

## TECHNEWS

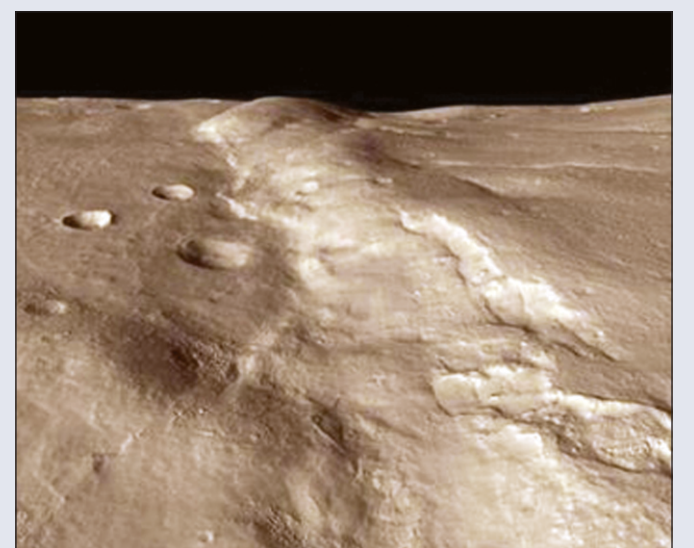# Nasa, Google aim for virtual space travel on Web

**REUTERS,** *Los Angeles*

WEB surfers may soon be able to explore the canyons of Mars and experience a virtual flight over the surface of the moon thanks to a deal announced on Monday between Web search company Google Inc. and the Nasa Ames Research Center.

The Space Act Agreement is the first in a series of collaborations between the Mountain View, California-based Internet company and the US National Aeronautics and Space Administration (Nasa).

Nasa and Google said they will work together on a wide range of technical problems and will make Nasa's space exploration work, much of which is currently scattered across the Web, more accessible to the public.

One project would let viewers see details of Mars and Earth's moon in a format similar to satellite picture views of the world made popular by applications such as Google Earth.



Eventually, they aim to offer real-time weather visualization and forecasting, high-resolution 3-D maps of the moon and Mars and real-time tracking of the International Space Station and the space shuttle from the screen of any computer with Internet access, they said in a statement.

Google and Nasa first part-

nered last year to build a new campus at Nasa's research center in Silicon Valley. The deal called for Google to develop up to 1 million square feet (93,000 square meter) of real estate within the Moffett Field research park.

Financial terms of the agreement were not disclosed.