Windows Tips for Photographers

Protection

Anti Malware

All Windows systems are extremely vulnerable to "nasty" people who want to use your machine to gain information about you or use your machine for various shady operations (SPAM, BotNets etc)

You need to protect your machine against this & you shouldn't connect to the internet without a Firewall & Anti-Virus programs running. This needn't cost you anything as there are several, very good Free to use programs available. Note: "Free" doesn't mean poor quality, the programs listed below are at least as effective as the chargeable programs available (McAffee, Norton etc)

1. Microsoft

The standard Windows firewall is pretty effective & at the very least you should use this, it comes bundled with Windows & just needs switching on

Microsoft provide a free Anti Virus called Microsoft Security Essentials, it's OK but tests have shown that it has missed some recent infections.

2. Free AV

Two anti Virus programs that do well in tests are:

Avast http://www.avast.com/en-gb/index

AVG http://www.avg.com/gb-en/trustav_download_ppc

3. Firewall

Two Recommended Firewall's are:

Comodo http://personalfirewall.comodo.com/index.html

Zone Alarm http://www.zonealarm.co.uk/security/en-us/zonealarm-pc-security-free-firewall.htm

Backups

It's always sensible to keep a separate copy of all your data as losing a hard disk

(probably the least reliable component in a PC) could result in you losing all your images and all the effort that you have put into them !

The method that I use to secure my pictures (and all my data in fact) is as follows:

1. Copies

I'm lucky enough to have a desktop & laptop PC's, I keep a duplicate copy of my Photo-library on both of these machines. To keep them in step I use a Microsoft program called Synctoy, this will synchronise folders between machines so it doesn't matter which machine you work on, Synctoy, when you run it will keep both libraries sync'ed

You can download a copy here https://www.microsoft.com/en-us/download/details.aspx?id=15155

As a "Belt & Bracers" I also have a USB external drive to which I also synchronise so if the worst happens I have 2 spare copies !

2. Backup

In addition to the above Photography specific copying I also secure my machine every week with a full backup.

The program I've found best is Easus ToDo backup (again it's free for home use)

Best downloaded here http://www.softpedia.com/get/System/Back-Up-and-Recovery/EASEUS-Todo-Backup.shtml – the main website will try to steer you towards the paid for versions, which for typical home use you don't need.

Each week I run a System Backup & File Backup on a Sunday morning. After the 1st run I use "Incremental" Backups which only copies the changes from the previous week, faster & uses less disk space, I have a different 3TB drive on my home network for this but you could use the same USB Drive you are using for photographs (I'm just Belt & Bracers)

It comes with a CD image that you should burn & keep safe as it will allow you to recover a dead machine.

As a note Easus also produce an excellent partition manager, if you don't know what a partition manager does it's best not to play with it, else you will need your backups !

Other Good Stuff for Photographers:

RAW file support

Microsoft supports all the various RAW formats in Windows, just not as standard. You have to download a support pack which will enable all the various RAW formats to be handled in the same way as JPG's. Download from:
https://www.microsoft.com/en-us/download/details.aspx?id=26829

Supported cameras are listed on the site

Photo Organiser / Editor

I'm a big fan of Picasa from Google, easy to use, intuitive & free:

http://picasa.google.co.uk/

It also has a Web Album feature which is great for quickly sharing pictures on the web

Dropbox

Dropbox is a magic little utility that synchronises files between all your devices, desktop, laptop phones, tablets & supports most operating systems Mac, Windows, Linux . All you do is move a file into your dropbox folder & it synchronises across all your kit ! If you snap pictures with your phone it will automatically upload to your PC

If you use the link below to download then you will get an additional 500Mb of space & so will I ;-)

http://db.tt/3cOEW9uH

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