

## **Computer Security Tips: Don't Click on Unknown Links**

You receive an e-mail from an unknown sender with a link to an article that sounds interesting. Should you click on it? You are searching for videos and find a website that you haven't seen before. It wants to install a video codex. Should you click on it? A webpage pops up saying that your computer is infected and you need to run a virus scan from the website. Should you click on it?

**The answer? No.**

It is very easy for hackers and those who run botnet systems to infect your machine via these innocent looking links. When you click on unknown links such as these, you run the risk of installing a back door Trojan on your machine. A Trojan virus looks like a good thing, a video codex or a virus scanner, but just like the Trojan Horse of antiquity, they can contain a nasty surprise.

**But my Anti-Virus will protect me right?**

Not necessarily. Trojan writers use programs called Obfuscators that purposefully obfuscate the virus code so they seem like a harmless utility to many anti-virus programs. Once a trojan is installed, Hackers can have full access to your machine and install root kits, steal passwords, or worse, use your machine to attack others.

**What should I do then?**

Do not click on web links that you don't know or appear suspicious. Things too good to be true, probably are. When you get an e-mail with web links in them, do not click on them. You can type the address into internet explorer or any browser yourself if you really want to visit the site. For example, if you have Adobe Flash Player (Available from Adobe.com), usually you do not need to install video codexes. If the website wants to install video codexes, do not allow it. It's not worth the risk. Most likely you can find the video on YouTube anyway.