



## WELCOME

This segment was originally intended for new Internet users, but while asking around we discovered that quite a few “old-timers” were still unaware of the best procedures and some of the risks. A selection of sites are obviously dangerous, and you need to know how to spot them; then there are others that you’d think ought to be okay until it is discovered that they take an age to load and seem determined to control what you do and where you go. A Season of Happiness isn’t like that. In designing and managing our own website, we have tried to make it easy for visitors. Try it out, skip from one page to another, take as long as you wish to browse, read and copy; maybe download a PDF or two. There are no traps, no security risks, no fees of any kind. That’s how we believe you want it. Not all websites, however, are as user-friendly. In the following months we’ll post some tips to help make your Internet experiences safer and less of a hassle.

### Security MATTERS!



Everyone needs a Security Manager. These are software companies that specialise in blocking the various security risks users face right at the front door before they invade their system. There are plenty of good ones to choose from. A few offer free versions which you can try out to see if they suit. Later, you may wish to upgrade to something more comprehensive and this will generally involve a subscription. If you can afford to, it is well worth paying for protection: without it your system will eventually be compromised and it will cost time and money to fix the problem.

Research the Internet security packages available to see what they include, because they aren’t all the same. Do you care if websites drop cookies onto your hard drive? These mini-programs just sit there, sending information of your visits back to a monitoring service telling them who you are, where you come from, which pages you have viewed, and so on. How about spam? We have these nuisance commercials diverted; you might prefer to stay informed. Although in theory neither of these practices ought to pose a security risk, bear in mind that the Internet is never 100% safe, despite expert reassurances. Before you take the plunge and sign up, have a word with other users to see which security software they use and whether they have any misgivings about the one they decided to go with.

The main risks come from viruses, spyware, malware and adware that sneak onto your hard drive causing all manner of disruption and destruction. They can even pull bank and personal details from your memory; and that means your address book too. Don’t believe you can stop this with a password. If you leave the door open for hackers, they can get into any folder or file, often in a matter of seconds!

A good Security Manager will guard against these problems, and more. Most will also provide a rating of websites so that you have some idea whether they are safe to visit, or may pose a threat. If a website has no rating at all or looks risky, don’t go there unless you know for certain that it is safe.

You can see from this Google search two marks of safety verification:

[A Season of Happiness | Facebook](https://www.facebook.com/aSeasonOfHappiness)    
<https://www.facebook.com/aSeasonOfHappiness>

There may be others that differ depending on the coding used by your own Security Manager.

**REMEMBER:** scammers and hackers are always finding new ways to get you, so stay one step ahead: after installing, update your security package regularly to ensure you have the most up-to-date protection.

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