

## Viruses

By John M. Adams, L.S. (REPRINTED WITH PERMISSION OF THE AUTHOR AND *THE EMPIRE STATE SURVEYOR*)

Greetings fellow cybernauts.

Many, if not all, of my previous articles have dealt with the land surveyor and his/her interaction within the realm of the internet, or cyberspace. However, there is a realm of cyberspace that many of us take for granted. This is known as the smallest realm of cyberspace, or simply the computer systems located within our offices.

Several attendees of the "Accessing the Information SuperHighway" seminar at the NYSAPLS 37th Annual Conference expressed their concerns regarding the possibility of getting a computer virus from the internet. This article will attempt to help the land surveyor's office take the necessary steps to help minimize the possibility of contracting a computer virus.

***"They mutate and become resistant ... just purchasing an anti-virus program is not sufficient."***

Computer viruses exist within the world today and will probably exist for many years to come. Granted, the more you access the internet and other computer systems, the more likely you are to contract a possible virus. There are currently in excess of 8,000 different computer viruses in the world today. Some basic and necessary precautionary steps can be taken to minimize the effects of computer viruses.

The first, and major preventative step, is to purchase an anti-virus computer program. This program would be of little use unless it is run on a regular basis. If your computer system(s) are turned on and off on a daily basis, then the inclusion of the necessary line(s) within your computer's boot-up files will be sufficient to have the anti-virus program run on a regular basis.

Should your computer systems be similar to mine, both my DOS and UNIX systems have been up and running now for in excess of six weeks, you will need to run the anti-virus program manually.

***If a client wishes to have you add your survey information to an existing CAD file, be sure to run a virus checking program ...***

Computer viruses are very similar to the viruses that affect the human body. They mutate and become resistant to the anti-virus programs, or vaccines, used to detect and neutralize them. Therefore, just purchasing an anti-virus program is not sufficient. Regular upgrading of that anti-virus program is necessary to maintain an upper edge on the computer virus issue. Downloading a file is not the only possible source of a computer virus. If a client wishes to have you add your survey information to an existing CAD file, be sure to run a virus checking program on the CAD file and the floppy disk itself to determine if a virus is present. Infection by a floppy disk is possibly the most prominent form of receiving a computer virus. This leads us to the second preventative step of security regarding the computer virus nightmare. Always run an anti-virus program on any floppy disk or computer file which is of unknown origin. In the case of a floppy disk, having the write-protect tab set may also help in preventing the contracting of a computer virus. Taking these simple steps will help prevent the infection of your computer system and, more importantly, your computer data files.

See you in cyberspace!

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## Upcoming Events

**February 18**

Council Meeting  
Toronto

**February 19-21**

AOLS Annual Meeting  
Toronto

**February 19**

CLS Manual of Instructions  
Workshop

**February 19**

Field Notes for Total Stations  
Seminar

**February 19**

The Professional Land  
Surveyor's Role in Land  
Information Management

**February 19**

Welcoming Party & Casino  
Night

**February 20**

Convocation Luncheon

**February 21**

President's Luncheon

**February 21**

President's Dinner & Dance  
Party

**February 22**

Council Meeting  
Toronto