The IT Geek’s
“Tip of the Week”

Lock the PC (Instead of Logging Off)

When you log in to your PC, your computer “assumes” you are the only one sitting at the keyboard for the duration of that session. If you leave without logging off, the computer is unable detect if someone else begins using it instead of you. That person will have all of your rights, privileges and access to your local and networked resources!

To prevent unauthorized access when you step away (even for just a few moments), you can lock your computer (instead of logging off). When you return and unlock it, all of the applications that were running before you locked the PC will still be running. In fact, things will appear exactly as they were before you locked the PC.

To lock a Windows XP computer, hold down the Windows key and press the letter “L.” To unlock the PC and resume your session, press the Ctrl, Alt and Del keys simultaneously and then type your password.

When you plan to be away from your computer for longer periods, you may wish to log off instead of locking it. Also, you can help conserve electricity by shutting down your PC when you will be out of the office for an extended period (for example, when you take vacation or travel). By the way, please don’t lock computers in classrooms and labs because the next user will not be able to logon.

Next week’s tip will build on this idea of locking the PC by showing you how the PC can automatically lock itself. If you have questions, comments or ideas for the next Tip of the Week, please contact us at HelpDesk@csum.edu.