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Posted To: spywareworkshop2004
Conversation: Spyware Workshop - Comment, P044509
Subject: Spyware Workshop - Comment, P044509

As a computer consultant for numerous small businesses in my area I am so pleased to see that you are looking into the menacing problem of Spyware/Adware. I have to deal with this problem on a daily basis, and the fact that the federal government has done nothing about it, is a clear omission of responsibility.

The number of customers that call me to repair computers because of severe problems caused by these products is many times larger then the number of customers that call me to repair computers damaged by viruses/trojans/etc. These products incapacitate computers on a daily basis in far greater numbers then any illegal code.. Not only are these products damaging to computers, but they can also be fraudulent. I just recently witnessed a customer who was trying to update their virus program, have the communication with the vendor (Symantec) intercepted, and an attempt to gather credit card information for another product that looked very much like legitimate product was executed. Had I not been looking over their shoulder, they would have paid for a product that they did not intend to order. I was recently exploring an email by a criminal in Korea who was trying to gather credit card information, and noticed the similarity in technology used by companies that consider themselves to be legitimate.

There are similarities in all these products that could easily be addressed. First almost all of the products will not uninstall without great effort by the infected user. Second almost all these products were downloaded under fraudulent and deceiving circumstances. A simple utility which promises to memorize your passwords is downloaded when no reasonable person would expect that the right to use that product comes with a constant hammering of pop-up ads on their computer screen. I am sure you will receive thousands of examples of these fraudulent practices and other similarities of their design. .

What I would greatly appreciate your attention to, is the fact that these products are often poorly written, and in combination with other products of a similar design more often then not bring computers to a point where they are less functional then a door stop.

The people that write and distribute these products should be sent to prison for at least as long as anyone who creates a virus. The fact that they feel they can operate as a legitimate business in today's environment is a clear testimonial to the inefficiency of our government. It is very disappointing that it has taken this long to even begin to explore this issue.

I beg of you.

Please do something about it.

Sincerely

Bruce J. Kramer