

From: sea@
Posted At: Tuesday, March 09, 2004 12:50 PM
Posted To: spywareworkshop2004
Conversation: Spyware Workshop--Comment,
Subject: Spyware Workshop--Comment,

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Note: Comment is also attached in MS Word format.

I am a personal computer consultant. I am usually hired to deal with computer problems or virus, Trojan, worm infections. Over six years of doing this I have learned that there is an amazingly large Spyware problem that is almost entirely unrecognized by the personal computing public. Nearly every computer I deal with is infected with Spyware or adware of some sort and usually with several different types. It's not unusual to find computers infected with more than a hundred Spyware programs and occasionally with several hundred. Users very often do not realize that they are being monitored, targeted for advertising, or having personal information stolen from their computer. The most damning information I have learned from this is that none of my customers have chosen to install these various types of Spyware. I repeat: They were all install without the user's permission.

I feel that there should be a simple and clear law that states that no software or program of any kind can be installed on a computer without the owner's explicit permission. It is not good enough to have references to information harvesting, ad targeting or and subsidiary program written into the license. The description of the software must include a specific & clear statement as to exactly what the software will do, what information is collected and what it will be used for. It must be specifically stated when software does any thing other than what the named program is designed to do. Permission to install the software must be asked by the vendor in a check box or form after the description statement has been made

Cookies & related software are often harmless and even useful but there are also tracking cookies, key loggers, BHOs & perhaps other software catagories that I don't know about. These should also be addressed by this law and should be in the straight forward form of anything that tracks use, collects information, targets ads or spies on the user in any way is not allowed on a computer without the users permission.

Thank you.

John Streich
WA