From: Steve Murdock
Posted At: Saturday, April 03, 2004 8:45 PM
Posted To: spywareworkshop2004
Conversation: SysAdmin's Commentary about spyware
Subject: SysAdmin's Commentary about spyware

Greetings,
  I just encountered this thread in a broadband forum and feel it necessary
to add my commentary. As a system admininstrator for one small area of a
multi-national enterprise company I encounter these "additions" to our
desktop systems on a regular basis. As efficient as the overall protection
for us is, it still cannot prevent these invasions of our equipment. I have
also encountered them on our home/church network.
  Our users can surf the internet during breaks, or during searches for
specific information, or parts, for instance. However, there is no reason
for some advertising agency to track what these systems are viewing as they
are not the property of the end user. Since these "additions" to our
systems occur without any warning, or CHOICE, I feel fully justified in
hunting them down and using Blocking Lists, or anti-SPYWARE software, to
prevent or kill them.
  No matter the prattling of "our software is benign and harmless..." by the
purveyors of these intruders; the "additions" can just as easily be turned
to reporting far more than "the user just typed 'Tennis'! Quick, go tell
Marketing at Wilson Sports" whether it be passwords, or access to local
systems or any other choice of those whose life pleasure is "hacking", as
used in the current lexicon, not the historical.
  The systems here at home are running behind a hardware firewall, a
software firewall, two different Anti-Virus programs and 2 anti-Spyware
programs. Updates are checked almost every day. Why? My wife can not afford
to have her on-line ministry shutdown! In my business the saying is "If you
are not paranoid about security in this job ... you will be in the next
one!" Regretabley, at work I can't use all of the free/shareware available
that I use here.
  Why is it that these "additions" are being called "drive-by shootings" by
so many? Why is it that they have to resort to stealth to obtain the
information about where we go, view, and do? Regardless of what the EULA's
of many softwares state ... we are only leasing the usage of the product..
the fact still remains that this putty colored metal box adjacent to me, and
all of it's contents, is still MY property, MY domain, My data, My choice as
to what there is that others can know about it.
  Please, in the workshop, turn away from the buzzwords, the pleas about
stifling progress, new e-business being stillborn; yada, yada. Especially,
"We are making the Internet Free!!" Oh, give me a break. It is bad enough
that most of my time is spent fighting off and rooting out the results of
some bored geeks with a programming gift. Why should I have to Clean my
systems of the offal these marketing "research" companies continuously
attempt to deposit everywhere. It feels like walking under all of the
pigeons in St Peters square.

Just Think Opt-In; Just Talk Opt-In. That is what should be my Right!
That is what should be the Right of all those who access the Internet:
Opt-In. If users are so lazy as to say yes to the blandishments of the
"goodness" these marketing "additions" will do for them; then, they can
Opt-In and experience all of the emails and pop-up ads and who knows what
else that this ...... stuff.... brings them. These "additions" should not
be allowed without asking permission of the system owner.
  I have said ... more than enough,
Opt-In
Steve Murdock
CA