

From: Kenyon, John
Posted At: Tuesday, April 06, 2004 4:58 PM
Posted To: spywareworkshop2004
Conversation: Spyware Workshop - Comment, P044509
Subject: Spyware Workshop - Comment, P044509

To Whom It May Concern,

MILLIONS OF PEOPLE ARE AFFECTED

Rarely a day goes by, let alone a full week, that I don't encounter a private citizen that has had to deal with the removal of some unwanted spyware. The process for isolating and removing this intrusive software is indistinguishable from the processes used to remove modern viruses and worms.

REMOVAL PROCESS IS DIFFICULT OR IMPOSSIBLE

The removal process usually involves many hours to first figure out what is causing a system problem, to then track down the detailed steps needed to do the removal, and to actually perform the tasks. The skills and knowledge needed to do this is invariably beyond the average computer user. This often means they are paying money for removal utilities or paying someone to do it for them. Often they do both. Some people never realize that their problems are caused by spyware at all and simply buy a new computer.

ECONOMIC DRAIN

The onslaught of this software is a pariah on our society stealing time from peoples' lives, diverting badly needed monetary resources, and subverting the potential benefits of the modern Internet. The makers take over computers they don't own by piggy-backing on software (browsers and operating systems) they don't make to utilize hardware paid for by their victims. The delivery of their "product" is done in such a way that web site images are invariably damaged and the publishers often deprived of income.

GOVERNMENT INTERVENTION IS NEEDED

Spyware proliferates by praying on the naiveté or ambivalence of the majority of users. People are either unaware or don't care that the act of installing their free screensaver or file sharing program will cause web sites to lose money. This is a clear instance in which it is necessary for governments to set boundaries regarding the installation of downloaded software.

PLEASE

Please act accordingly - Millions of taxpayers can't be wrong! And thank you for addressing this rapidly escalating problem.

Sincerely,
John Kenyon