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Conversation: Spyware Workshop - Comment, P044509
Subject: Spyware Workshop - Comment, P044509

Thank you for investigating this issue.

Spyware is an Internet scourge. I am a relatively sophisticated user and yet I fall prey to these nasty pests. I run three separate spyware detection programs: Pest Patrol, Ad-Aware and Spybot Search and Destroy, and still manage to have my browser hijacked.

Many spyware applications exploit windows security holes to install themselves without the user's knowledge. These "drive-by" installs are no different than having a hacker break into your system and install a back door program. Often once a spyware program is installed by these techniques; it will install additional programs also without the user's consent.

Yesterday, I had my browser hijacked by eUniverse.com, when I attempted to follow a link on a commercial site from a vendor; my browser was redirected to a Incredifind.com page instead. I started getting pop-up messages from "Virtual Bouncer" offering to increase my browser security settings and also an application called Stop-Pop installed itself offering to block unwanted pop-ups. I had scanned my machine the day before with Ad-Aware and Pest Patrol. Rescanning my computer revealed 136 spyware objects (applications and tracking cookies) from "Shop at home Agent", "VX2 Better Internet", "Ad Destroy", "180 degree search" "eUniverse", "Virtual Bouncer" "NCASE" and others.

Eradicating these programs cost me two hours of productivity yesterday alone.

My secretary had a spyware program on her machine a few months back that had installed itself into the TCP stack. The spyware program was causing her computer to crash and generally reducing its performance. Deleting the program prevented the computer from accessing the network. Since we use roaming profiles on the network, this prevented her from even being able to log onto her computer. This cost her and our network technician several hours of productivity.

These programs represent a real cost to American productivity and should be treated as any other unauthorized and destructive break-in to a computer system, with lengthy prison sentences.

Respectfully,

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