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Posted At: Saturday, May 15, 2004 4:06 AM
Conversation: Spyware Workshop - Comment, P044509
Posted To: spywareworkshop2004

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To whom it may concern.

I am a relatively well knowledged Windows user who subscribes to the PC PITSTOP websites' newsletter. They had a link to this address as a way for folks to express their opinions about "spyware".

In my several years of internet surfing experience I have been the unwilling recipient of spyware programs quite a few times. Some of it doesn't come from the internet but from my child's computer games. The Broderbund software company has spyware programs bundled with some of the CD ROM games that they sell. Other times, such as on lyric finder sites, in order to have your search completed on a website you have to click "o.k." in a dialog box that has obscure or buried information about agreeing to have software installed on your computer (my wife has had problems with this method - she is a novice surfer, which is representative of the average computer skill of everyone I know) or a program install box which installs a clock program, or a cute selection of cursors, or an e-mail program, or a search bar for IE, or something of the like which contains spyware, without making clear that spyware is install! ed with the snazzy new clock or whatever.

To me, these intrusions are comparable to talking to a stranger on the street and then having that person try to dupe me into giving them keys to my house so that they can snoop around to see what kind of things I have, and for them to use that information to badger me into buying something. That is wrong on many levels.

I personally have not actually installed any spyware programs from the internet in a couple of years, but my wife is still occasionally fooled into doing it. It is installed on our computer every time my daughter plays her "Reader Rabbit" CD ROM game, and I don't recall reading anything in the EULA about continual installation of monitoring software (it is caught by the Ad-Aware program regularly).

I run the Ad-Aware 6 program a couple of times a week and have anywhere from 10 to 30 "tracking cookies" everytime I run it. I sometimes have Registry entries for spyware. I don't knowingly agree to have any of these things put on my computer, and I don't believe that anyone has the time to read the entire "Privacy Statement" (which is usually in lawyer language anyway) of every page they visit, and also those of all the third party entities or affiliates that might be listed in a Privacy Statement. These people are hiding in piles of paperwork and legal jargon which is also wrong on many levels.

Two of my friends have asked me to "tune-up" their computers because of poor performance. They were not even aware of the existence of spyware until they asked me to help speed up their machines. After ridding them of spyware and installing the free Zone Alarm firewall, both of them had an immediate boost in performance.

Spyware is continually installed everywhere without people's knowledge and that is wrong and the fact that installing software without someone's knowledge is illegal needs to be enforced.

Thanks and have a good day,
Charlie Siefert

