

ActiveX error and virus infection

Source:

<http://www.tech-archive.net/Archive/WinXP/microsoft.public.windowsxp.general/2005-02/15787.html>

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Date: 02/13/05

Date: 12 Feb 2005 19:20:36 -0800

Last night my son downloaded from a chat program what turned out to be an infected file. My son says the file was named "pictures.pif" . Since then I've had problems with Internet Explorer ActiveX security settings. I get the following Internet Explorer dialog box message: "your current security settings prohibit running ActiveX controls on this page..."

Here's when it happens: 1. when my Windows desktop is loading, I get the message. Once I click OK in the message box, Desktop appears to finish loading correctly. 2. When I'm working in Windows Explorer, and click on a folder in the left pane, the right pane remains blank and the message box pops up, 3. When I open Control Panel, the message pops up and I'm unable to open any selections such as Add/Remove Programs, 4. When I try to run Norton Antivirus, nothing happens. Other aspects of Norton Systemworks are not affected. There may be other Windows operations affected as well; these are the ones I've come across thusfar.

Here's what I've tried to correct the problem. 1. I downloaded Spyware Doctor (S.D.) and on the first run it found lots of problems, one of which was that my browser had been hijacked and security settings had been manipulated. The location of the infection was noted as "multiple". I allowed S.D. to clean this up, but the problem persists. 2. I manually checked security settings in IE6. IE6 security is set as "medium" and settings look fine. 3. Since I couldn't operate Norton Antivirus, I ran an online scan from TrendMicro.com It found nothing. 4. I ran Spybot and Adware with the latest definitions. They each found some problems and cleaned them up.

None of the solutions has resolved the problem. Interestingly, the problem hasn't prevented me from downloading and installing the latest Windows critical update, which I did earlier today. Obviously something is very wrong. Can you help?