

Re: UGH! Help....please.

Source:

http://www.tech-archive.net/Archive/WinXP/microsoft.public.windowsxp.help_and_support/2004-08/4271.html

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Date: 08/14/04

Date: Sat, 14 Aug 2004 09:14:03 -0600

Greetings --

There are at least three varieties of pop-ups, and the solutions vary accordingly. Which specific type(s) is troubling you?

1) Does the title bar of these pop-ups read "Messenger Service?"

This type of spam has become quite common over the past several months, and unintentionally serves as a valid security "alert." It demonstrates that you haven't been taking sufficient precautions while connected to the Internet. Your data probably hasn't been compromised by these specific advertisements, but if you're open to this exploit, you may well be open to other threats, such as the Blaster Worm that recently swept across the Internet. Install and use a decent, properly configured firewall. (Merely disabling the messenger service, as some people recommend, only hides the symptom, and does little or nothing to truly secure your machine.) And ignoring or just "putting up with" the security gap represented by these messages is particularly foolish.

Messenger Service of Windows

<http://support.microsoft.com/default.aspx?scid=KB;en-us;168893>

Messenger Service Window That Contains an Internet Advertisement Appears

<http://support.microsoft.com/?id=330904>

Stopping Advertisements with Messenger Service Titles

<http://www.microsoft.com/windowsxp/pro/using/howto/communicate/stopspam.asp>

Blocking Ads, Parasites, and Hijackers with a Hosts File

<http://www.mvps.org/winhelp2002/hosts.htm>

Oh, and be especially wary of people who advise you to do nothing more than disable the messenger service. Disabling the messenger service, by itself, is a "head in the sand" approach to computer security. The real problem is not the messenger service pop-ups;

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they're actually providing a useful, if annoying, service by acting as a security alert. The true problem is the unsecured computer, and you've been advised to merely turn off the warnings. How is this helpful?

2) For regular Internet pop-ups, you might try the free 12Ghosts Popup-killer from <http://12ghosts.com/ghosts/popup.htm>, Pop-Up Stopper from <http://www.panicware.com/>, or the Google Toolbar from <http://toolbar.google.com/>, which is what I use.

3) To deal with pop-ups caused by any sort of "adware" and/or "spyware," such as Gator, Comet Cursors, Xupiter, Bonzai Buddy, or KaZaA, and their remnants, that you've deliberately (but without understanding the consequences) installed, two products that are quite effective (at finding and removing this type of scumware) are Ad-Aware from www.lavasoft.de and SpyBot Search & Destroy from www.safer-networking.org/. Both have free versions. It's even possible to use SpyBot Search & Destroy to "immunize" your system against most future intrusions. I use both and generally perform manual scans every week or so to clean out cookies, etc.

WinXP's built-in firewall is adequate at stopping incoming attacks, and hiding your ports from probes. It doesn't give you any alarms, or any other kind of indication, to tell you that it is working, though. Nor is it very easily configurable. What WinXP also does not do, is protect you from any Trojans or spyware that you (or someone else using your computer) might download and install inadvertently. It doesn't monitor out-going traffic at all, other than to check for IP-spoofing, much less block (or at even ask you about) the bad or the questionable out-going signals. It assumes that any application you have on your hard drive is there because you want it there, and therefore has your "permission" to access the Internet. Further, because the ICF is a "stateful" firewall, it will also assume that any incoming traffic that's a direct response to a Trojan's or spyware's out-going signal is also authorized.

ZoneAlarm, Kerio, or Sygate are all much better than WinXP's built-in firewall, and are much more easily configured, and there are free versions of each readily available. Even the commercially available Symantec's Norton Personal Firewall is superior by far, although it does take a heavier toll of system performance than do ZoneAlarm or Sygate.

Bruce Chambers

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Help us help you:

<http://dts-l.org/goodpost.htm>

<http://www.catb.org/~esr/faq/smart-questions.html>

You can have peace. Or you can have freedom. Don't ever count on having both at once. - RAH

"NeverSleepNeverDie" <NeverSleepNeverDie@discussions.microsoft.com>

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wrote in message

news:96D4362B-951B-4E5F-8754-0569D24D1656@microsoft.com...

>I am having some real spyware problems...I have two programs (Spybot
>Search
> and Destroy, and Ad-aware) I use the programs to scan and fix the
> problems 2
> times a day...the problems always come back, and I get tons and tons
> of pops
> ups...they do not stop, they are so annoying. I have a pop up
> blocker, and
> with Spybot, I do this thing where it blocks bad things also, none
> of these
> things help, I don't know what to do. I do not have a firewall, if I
> should
> have one, can I download one for free somewhere? And I don't know if
> I have a
> virus or not (I probably do because these pop ups load things on to
> my
> computer all the time), does anyone know of a free virus scan I
> could use? I
> really need help with this...these pop ups are driving me crazy!