

Re: Is AOL Router software a virus?

Source:

http://www.tech-archive.net/Archive/WinXP/microsoft.public.windowsxp.network_web/2004-10/2937.html

From: Chuck (*none_at_example.net*)

Date: 10/21/04

Date: 21 Oct 2004 18:39:28 -0500

On Thu, 21 Oct 2004 16:02:41 -0700, "Ned Heller" <epheller@sbcglobal.net> wrote:

>I recently installed AOL 9.0a. This morning, after turning my computer on,
>I was presented with in a window stating that I had a so-and-so router, and
>would I like to install AOL Router software. I said yes. After
>installation and restart, nothing would connect to the internet. Not AOL or
>anything. In fact, if I launched Outlook express, the AOL login screen
>would come up. Ditto any browser.
>
>I had to unistall AOL and all its related software to get things to work
>again. So my question, is it safe to reinstall AOL, or is this program a
>virus?

Ned,

Some nasty folks might answer that AOL itself is a virus. ;-}

Be that as it may, I do know that AOL is not a simple Ethernet over {Cable | DSL} ISP.

Do you, in fact, have a router connected? Are you on AOL Broadband?

Here's an interesting article:

<<http://www.homenethelp.com/web/howto/aol-share.asp>>

You also might want to check out the BBR AOL Forum:

<<http://www.dslreports.com/forum/aolplus>>

I don't see any Google about an "AOL Router" spyware or virus. That doesn't mean it doesn't exist though. Fortunately, there a number of reliable, free tools to identify any infection that you may have acquired.

How current is your virus protection? Try one or more of these free online virus scans, which should complement your current protection:

<<http://www.bitdefender.com/scan/license.php>>

<<http://www.pandasoftware.com/activescan>>

<<http://www.ravantivirus.com/scan/>>

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<<http://security.symantec.com/ssc/home.asp>>

<http://housecall.trendmicro.com/housecall/start_corp.asp>

Now check for, and learn to defend against, additional problems – adware, crapware, spyware.

Start by downloading each of the following additional free tools:

AdAware <<http://www.lavasoftusa.com/>>

CWS shredder <<http://www.majorgeeks.com/download4086.html>>

HijackThis <<http://www.majorgeeks.com/download.php?det=3155>>

LSP-Fix and WinsockXPFix <<http://www.cexx.org/lspfix.htm>>

Spybot S&D <<http://www.safer-networking.org/index.php?page=download>>

Stinger <<http://us.mcafee.com/virusInfo/default.asp?id=stinger>>

Create a separate folder for HijackThis, such as C:\HijackThis – copy the downloaded file there. AdAware, CWS shredder, and Spybot S&D have install routines – run them. The other downloaded programs can be copied into, and run from, any convenient folder.

First, run Stinger. Have it remove any problems found.

Next, close all Internet Explorer and Outlook windows, and run CWS shredder. Have it fix all problems found.

Next, run AdAware. First update it ("Check for updates now"), configure for full scan (<<http://forum.aumha.org/viewtopic.php?t=5877>>), then scan. When scanning finishes, remove all Critical Objects found.

Next, run Spybot S&D. First update it ("Search for updates"), then run a scan ("Check for problems"). Trust Spybot, and delete everything ("Fix Problems") that is displayed in Red.

Then, run HijackThis ("Scan"). Do NOT make any changes immediately. Save the HJT Log.

<<http://forums.spywareinfo.com/index.php?showtopic=227>>

<<http://www1.spywareinfo.com/articles/hijacked/prevent.php>>

Finally, have your HJT log interpreted by experts at one or more of the following security forums (and please post a link to your forum posts, here):

Aumha: <<http://forum.aumha.org/index.php>>

Net-Integration: <<http://forums.net-integration.net/>>

Spyware Info: <<http://forums.spywareinfo.com/>>

Spyware Warrior: <<http://spywarewarrior.com/index.php>>

Tom Coyote: <<http://forums.tomcoyote.org/>>

If removal of any spyware affects your ability to access the internet (some spyware builds itself into the network software, and its removal may damage your network), run LSP-Fix and / or WinsockXPFix.

Finally, improve your chances for the future.

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Harden your browser. There are various websites which will check for vulnerabilities, here are three which I use.

<http://www.jasons-toolbox.com/BrowserSecurity/>

<http://bcheck.scanit.be/bcheck/>

https://testzone.secunia.com/browser_checker/

Block Internet Explorer ActiveX scripting from hostile websites (Restricted Zone).

<<https://netfiles.uiuc.edu/ehowes/www/main.htm>> (IE-SpyAd)

Block known dangerous scripts from installing.

<<http://www.javacoolsoftware.com/spywareblaster.html>>

Block known spyware from installing.

<<http://www.javacoolsoftware.com/spywareguard.html>>

Make sure that the spyware detection / protection products that you use are reliable:

http://www.spywarewarrior.com/rogue_anti-spyware.htm

Harden your operating system. Check at least monthly for security updates.

<http://windowsupdate.microsoft.com/>

Block possibly dangerous websites with a Hosts file. Three Hosts file sources I use:

http://www.accs-net.com/hosts/get_hosts.html

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

(The third is included, and updated, with Spybot (see above)).

Maintain your Hosts file (merge / eliminate duplicate entries) with:

eDexter <http://www.accs-net.com/hosts/get_hosts.html>

Hostess <<http://accs-net.com/hostess/>>

Secure your operating system, and applications. Don't use, or leave activated, any accounts with names or passwords with trivial (guessable) values. Don't use an account with administrative authority, except when you're intentionally doing administrative tasks.

Use common sense. Yours. Don't install software based upon advice from unknown sources. Don't install free software, without researching it carefully. Don't open email unless you know who it's from, and how and why it was sent.

Educate yourself. Know what the risks are. Stay informed. Read Usenet, and various web pages that discuss security problems. Check the logs from the security products that you use regularly, look for things that don't belong, and take action when necessary.

How did I get infected in the first place?

<http://forums.net-integration.net/index.php?showtopic=3051>

Essential tips for infection prevention

<http://forums.spywareinfo.com/index.php?showtopic=24339>

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Cheers,

Chuck

Paranoia comes from experience – and is not necessarily a bad thing.