

Malware Comes to Social Media and Search Portals

Nobody ever said that malware makers weren't creative. For their latest trick, they're using banner ads on high-traffic sites like MySpace and Excite to entice people into installing adware, spyware, and so-called "scareware" -- software that, in the words of Washington Post blogger Brian Krebs, "reports false or exaggerated system security threats on the user's computer, mainly in an attempt to get them to buy even more worthless software to clean up the supposed security problems."

People who unwittingly click on malicious MySpace banner ads will get bombarded with adware, spyware, and Trojan horse programs that are difficult to detect and sometimes almost impossible to remove. Meanwhile, a security researcher found a banner ad on Excite.com that redirects to a page that attempts to install a notorious scareware program called "PerformanceOptimizer."

Installing regular security updates to Windows, Internet Explorer and popular plug-ins like QuickTime and Flash can help mitigate these problems. Of course, that requires you to be vigilant about downloading and installing security updates, which may or may not have been thoroughly tested by software makers before they were released. (Sometimes in the race to plug security holes, software providers inadvertently cause bigger problems than the ones they fix.)

No matter what protections you have in place, it's generally best not to click on anything that blinks, flashes, or gives you scary warnings that "Your computer may be infected with harmful spyware programs!!!" But if you happen to accidentally download one of these nasties, be sure to notify your IT service provider immediately so that it may be removed.

About Desktop Resources, Inc.

Desktop Resources, Inc. was founded in 1995 by Tony Schafer, and is a leader in helping organizations couple their business initiatives with the technology to address those needs. DRI's "InformIT" managed services offerings proactively manage client infrastructure and strive to prevent problems before they occur. For more details, contact DRI at (317) 596-3650 or <http://www.DesktopResources.com>