



How Safe Is Your Network?

87% of US employees do personal browsing at work, 65% say it provides them with short breaks.¹ How many of your employees are surfing the web when they should be working? Employees between the ages of 18 and 34 estimated spending an average of 45 minutes each day on personal pursuits at work.² Surfing the web not only wastes time but it also potentially exposes your company to viruses, spyware and adware. In fact, porn and gambling sites are usually the first sites to distribute malicious code.³ Myspace.com and other similar websites are also very high risk sites and are rapidly becoming very popular amongst employees. Still aren't convinced? Let's take a quick look at the world of malicious code.

Malicious programs such as viruses, spyware and adware are created by criminals for many different reasons. Typically, viruses are created for the destruction of information like damaging programs, deleting files or reformatting a hard disk. Spyware and adware however, serve a completely different purpose. Spyware is used to monitor, collect or gather information from a computer, like stored usernames and passwords, without the user's consent and then transmit that data back to the programmer's computer. Adware is created to automatically display advertisements on your screen. Although adware is considered for the most part harmless if users click on the advertisements it may launch other websites that distribute malicious code. Not to mention the advertisements can become increasingly annoying and adversely affect the performance of your computer.

One particular form of spyware - The Keystroke logger (keylogger for short) is used to record a user's keystrokes and then upload the recorded data back to the programmer's computer. The programmer then filters the data sent to him for the words that appear the most often. This process yields a list of usernames and passwords along with the more common words like "a", "to", "the", etc. Unfortunately once you are infected your bank sites, shopping sites and just about any other sites that you sign into are exposed and at risk of being exploited. This is potentially the most hazardous type of malicious code out today.

These malicious programs are meant to install themselves without the user's knowledge, so what can you do to protect your company's sensitive information? Let us show you different ways to prevent this regrettable misuse of company time. There are many options to be explored and a suitable solution should be found on almost any budget.

¹ According to a 2005 survey conducted by Vault, Inc. (www.itfacts.biz)

² According to a 2007 survey conducted by OfficeTeam (www.officeteam.com)

³ According to Yuval Ben-Itzhak, chief technology officer of Web security firm Finjan.