



THE RHODENIZER REPORT

NOVEMBER 2009

www.rhodenizer.com

INSIDE THIS ISSUE:

TRAPPED AND HELD FOR RANSOM	1
NET NEUTRALITY UPDATE	1
DRAW AND SHOW WITH PAPERSHOW	2
QUESTIONS FROM THE INBOX	3
BLACKBERRY SECURITY ADVISORY	4
ABOUT RHODENIZER IT	4

TRAPPED AND HELD FOR RANSOM

Beware if you use Google, Yahoo, or Bing to search for information on antivirus programs because what you'll find in those search results are not only sites with helpful security products, but also deceptive links leading you into traps that will try to infect your PC. Even sponsored ads alongside the search results often contain links to the very malware you want protection from. Some cause pop-ups that claim you've been infected with viruses and to "click here" to remove them. Of course, taking the bait only allows the real infection to enter your system, disable your real antivirus, and take your PC hostage.

For years, the largest search providers have been selling security-related keywords to criminals trying to trick you into downloading their fake antivirus products. The criminals then steal your personal information, or hold your PC for ransom - forcing you to pay if you want their malware removed. The search providers are aware of this, but have done nothing to stop it because of the large sums of money they get from those ads (neither Bing nor Google do any background screening on advertisers).

While top officials at Google have acknowledged the problem, they haven't done anything



about it yet. At the 2009 Virus Bulletin Conference, Google's Eric Davis stated that "the industry needs to work together to combat this problem". He also called for the creation of an industry clearinghouse that would certify ad servers and create online-ad agencies. Microsoft is the only one going after the malicious advertisers so far. A Sept. 18 (cont. on P. 2)

THE TAKE-AWAY POINTS:

- **Some online ads are malicious PC traps.**
- **Google & Verizon join Net neutrality debate.**
- **Papershow for drawing and presentations.**
- **BlackBerry can't be hacked unless you allow it to be.**

NET NEUTRALITY UPDATE

Last week, the FCC announced draft rules on how to prevent ISP's from favoring Internet traffic from certain companies, and slowing down traffic from others. While they don't agree on everything, Google and Verizon have joined forces in a joint letter of response describing what they would like to see in the final version of those regulations and pointing out the rights of end users to decide

what hardware and software they want to use.

The debate still draws battle lines between Internet service providers like AT&T and Comcast—and Internet companies that want to provide you with competing services across those carrier's connections like Google, Skype, and Vonage.

The FCC agreed to discuss rules subject to "reasonable network

management" such as the blocking of legal content, apps, or services; barring of devices unless they "hurt" networks; and slowing or stifling services by competitors.

Ranking Republican on the FCC Commission, Robert McDowell says, "I do not share the majority's view that the Internet is showing breaks and cracks, nor do I think the government is the best tool to fix it".

DRAW AND SHOW WITH PAPERSHOW

Check out this cool new thing at www.papershow.com and be amazed! It's like an electronic white board that captures what you draw, but it works like pen and paper. As you draw, the PC displays the image for everyone to see. When you're done, you can e-mail it, export it to an Adobe PDF, or print out copies.

Installation is easy. Just plug the USB device into your PC and follow the prompts to install the included software. The USB device communicates with a special pen via Bluetooth signal and picks up

the data as you draw across the special paper sprinkled with tiny dots that the pen sensor uses to track its location on the page. You can tap icons on the side of the paper to make it change color, fonts, add shapes, or erase.

Retail price for the Canson Papershow is \$199.99, but you can find it now on Amazon.com for as low as \$174. The only downside is the special paper. Once you use up the starter pack, you have to buy the 48 page refill pads at \$12.99 each. Still, that's much cheaper than a tablet

PC, and easier to carry around than an electronic whiteboard.

Go to the papershow.com website and watch the video. It takes a minute to download but the demonstration is worth it. You may get some ideas for how this handy gadget could enhance your business.—C.R.



TRAPPED AND HELD FOR RANSOM (CONT.)

(cont. from P. 1) article posted on MSNBC.com reported Microsoft has filed lawsuits against several suspicious online advertisers.

Another way these criminals infiltrate your PC is through the ads they place on well-known legitimate websites such as the NYTimes.com. The New York Times described their attack in a Sept. 14 article once they became aware of it. Malicious ads like these appear normal, but can infect your system if you merely view the page. This is especially true if your Java, Flash, or QuickTime media players are unpatched and outdated. Once again, these legitimate sites sell advertis-

ing space for big bucks to whomever is willing to pay. Seldom does anyone ask questions or analyze the code that the so-called "advertisers" put there until someone reports having been victimized.

Internet Explorer, Firefox, and other browsers now support "bad-site" lists, but not all malicious ad servers will ever be listed. Your antivirus software can't protect you unless you have the very latest updates, and those updates include a "signature" that identifies the malware being used.

You can, however, check suspicious web addresses against those reported for

criminal activity in the volunteer supported database at Hosts-file.net. Among the sites I found listed for selling fraudulent software were cyberdefender.com and av-internetsecurity.com. If you see links to these, or any others with counterfeit programs such as "Windows PC Defender", don't click on them. Just back away.

The Internet is a dangerous place today. Stay on your guard. Keep your antivirus software up-to-date. Download all Critical Windows updates promptly. Back up your files regularly.

For downloads you can trust, go to the "Cliff's Picks" page of my website.—C. R.

"...Malicious ads like these appear normal, but can infect your system if you merely view the page..."

QUESTIONS FROM THE INBOX

Q- “Can we use the server to access free internet music like Pandora through Internet Explorer?”

A- Using Internet Explorer to connect to the Internet from your server would expose the business to unnecessary risks. I would strongly advise against it.

Q- “Is there a way to setup a wireless router so that the wireless devices only have access to the Internet and not to the wired devices like my PC and printer?”

A- Yes, if your wireless router supports VLAN's. Create 2 separate VLAN's with 2 separate DHCP servers—each in it's own subnet.

You can get a Linksys WRT54GL for only \$55 and install DD-WRT v.24 for free. But, if all that seems a bit too technical for you, let me know. I can set that up for you in about an hour.

Q- “If I upgrade to Windows 7 now, how will that benefit my small business?”

A- There are some nice new features in Windows 7, but I wouldn't take a perfectly good Windows XP machine and upgrade it unless there was some ROI on that investment.

In an office environment of less than 10 PC's, you won't

get much benefit. Especially if you're not having any major problems now. But, if you are supporting a large number of local and remote computers—or you're currently having so much trouble that it's time to wipe and reload the operating system—you may find that Windows 7 has more to offer than either XP or Vista.

With the purchase of a new system, definitely choose Windows 7 Professional and you'll be glad you did.

Q- “I've read that replacing my hard drive with a “solid state” drive will make it run much faster. Is this true? And, should I buy one for my primary work PC?”

A- Yes. It's true. The latest generation of SSD's are over ten times faster than most hard drives. They also have the benefit of being very small, make no noise, consume less power, and generate no heat. Since they don't have to spin up, boot times for PC's I've seen tested were less than 5 seconds. Sounds great, doesn't it?

Now, the bad news. They are still very expensive. Compare a 640GB hard drive at \$79 to a 160GB SSD at over \$600. That's still a bit much in my judgment. They are selling like hotcakes to many specialty users in certain types of business where speed is crucial to success, but most

small businesses can't justify that kind of expense for the luxury of opening Excel in 1.5 seconds as opposed to 10.

There are also some other issues still being ironed out that have to do with it slowing down over time. A new feature called TRIM is supposed to resolve that and will be available in upcoming firmware updates from the manufacturers. Windows 7 has built-in support for TRIM, but XP and Vista will need additional software updates to work with that.

My favorite so far is the Intel X-25M second generation (G2) SSD's. When the price drops below \$300 I may have to break down and get one (so I can do more research on it, of course).

Q- “What antivirus software do you recommend?”

A- I have experience with lots of them and it comes down to just two for me. Eset NOD32, and Kaspersky Anti-Virus 2010. They both have superior protection without slowing down your PC. My top choice has been Kaspersky because of price, but Eset just lowered their price on NOD32 version 4, so I'm planning to give it a try next month and report on it.



“My favorite so far is the Intel X-25M second generation (G2) SSD's .”

E-mail your questions to:
questions@rhodenizer.com

BLACKBERRY SECURITY ADVISORY

At the "Hack in the Box" cyber security conference in Malaysia last month, an expert stated that there's no technical way to hack a BlackBerry mobile device, but there are ways to harass the user.

Sheran Gunasekera, head of research and development at ZenConsult, said that since Research in Motion (RIM), the BlackBerry's maker, encrypts everything, a man-in-the-middle attack is unlikely. Because there are few vulnerabilities, criminals have few potential points of entry without physical access to it.

Gunasekera described various means of attacking a BlackBerry through the use of spy software (such as those I wrote about in the June '09 issue of the Rhodenizer Report) — remote use of its camera, alteration of contact information, the ability to run up international phone charges, and use of the phone to pump out phishing messages. Not to mention the annoyance of listening in on phone calls and using the GPS to track the owner's movements.

Gunasekera pointed out that,

unlike the Apple iPhone store where every application is tested, BlackBerry applications are not routinely tested by RIM. Gunasekera's advice for BlackBerry users can be summed up as:

- 1). Don't install random, free software on your device.
- 2). Don't leave your phone unattended or let others use it. If they do, keep a careful eye on their activities.
- 3). Learn to set default application permissions.
- 4). Always enable the device password.



ABOUT RHODENIZER IT

We are a different kind of IT service provider. We don't resell any hardware or software. We find the best deals on what you need and pass the savings along to you.

Our mission is to help small businesses reduce expenses, increase productivity, and safeguard private information.

It's about more than just fixing computers. We also

provide IT consulting and services that include finding the best solutions to your business problems.

We work with clients to prepare disaster recovery plans that ensure their critical data remains safe, yet easily accessible. Additional benefits include money-saving ideas for managing your computer resources and planning for future business expansion.

We have the training, experience, and know-how to provide the right solutions for your needs, and your budget.

Just call to schedule your **free initial consultation with no risk, and no obligation.**

Tell me about your computer needs or IT issues. I'll recommend a course of action that makes sense for your situation at no cost to you. What have you got to lose?

Rhodenizer IT
Information Technology Services

P. O. Box 768122
Roswell, Georgia 30076

(404) 202-8657

www.rhodenizer.com

The Rhodenizer Report is published and distributed by Rhodenizer IT, Inc. © Copyright 2009. All Rights Reserved.

DISCLAIMER: The information, opinions, and recommendations expressed within are for general knowledge and are not intended to be a substitute for personal consultation. Furthermore, some information may be based upon other information provided by third parties. Unless specifically stated, no form of independent verification is undertaken. The author is not responsible for any errors, omissions, or inaccuracies. This information is provided free of charge and is without warranty, neither explicit nor implied. The reader assumes all risk when performing any computer modifications without the direct supervision of a qualified IT professional.