This Month At NOPC

Smart Computing Magazine & Momentum

Inside this issue:

MailWasher Pro

While upgrading my subscription with ZoneAlarm Pro for virus updates, I was given the opportunity to purchase an additional program called "MailWasher Pro". I haven't been too successful, or willing to spend the time to set up the standard browsers (MS Internet Explorer, Netscape, Opera and Mozilla) to eliminate spam. This application looked like it might meet my needs. The price was right…only $19.95 ($10.00 off the regular price). ZoneAlarm will occasionally suggest other applications to their registered users, and I have found their offerings will worth the expense. So I ordered it.

The software was obtained as a download from the ZoneAlarm web site. The file was 2.14 Mb, which took little or no time on my cable connection. Even with a dial-up connection, that isn't a large file. After download, clicking on the file caused it to un-zip and install itself on my computer. It nicely allowed me to choose the location that I wanted it installed, not like some applications that insist on placing everything on the C: drive.

Once installed on your computer, you open MailWasher Pro and as the program starts, a sub-window offers to import you email accounts to be check into the application. The only caveat is that this only works with Outlook, Outlook Express, Netscape Messenger and Eudora Mail. It did import my Hotmail account, but did not import my email accounts set up in the Opera browser. However, I was able to manually input these e-mail accounts

August Meeting Topics

Smart Computing is hitting the road this summer and will be visiting us at the August meeting. Smart Computing magazine has been a respected computing resource for computer users for years. Their mission is to help users of all skill levels improve their PC-related productivity. Come spend a fun and dynamic evening with the Smart Computing folks, Marcy Gunn, marketing representative, Dana Montey, editor, and Erin Rodriguez, graphic illustrator, and you will learn everything you need to know about Smart Computing and more, including all of the Smart Computing Membership benefits: the monthly issue of the magazine, all facets of the Smart Computing Web site, and the Smart Computing & CPU User Group Program. Plus, all attendees will receive a free issue of Smart Computing!

After Smart Computing's presentation, Shelly Bordes will talk to us about Momentum (formerly The Bierman Group). Momentum provides customized training, coaching and consulting services to companies. Momentum is based in Baton Rouge and has an office in New Orleans.

Security Testing Online - Fraud or Not?

By Greg West, Editor of SCUG REPORT Sarnia Computer User's Group (SCUG), Sarnia, Ontario, Canada

Recently, while researching material I came across an article which discussed "Spring Cleanup" and computer maintenance. The first suggestion was to run your computer through an online test to see whether your system is secure or insecure. The current warnings of updating patches, Spam attacks, and overall computer safety, prompted me to say, "why not" as I clicked into "NanoProbe Technology Internet Security Testing for Windows Users" that uses a program called: Shields UP!! (http://grc.com). Suspecting a scam of some sort I figured I would attempt to trick this program. I would run the test twice, once with my firewall turned off and another test with it operating.

My curiosity peaked immediately after my first click when I received a message that I "was about to view pages over a secure connection", a more than familiar message indeed. So I continued on, yet still mostly skeptical that there was some sort of come-on to reach out and take my money. No sooner than I clicked the "ok" button, did I receive this strange message:

" Greetings Gregory! Without your knowledge or explicit permission, the Windows networking technology which connects your computer to the Internet may be offering some or all of your computer's data to the entire world at this very moment!

(For example ... that's how I know your name!)" Next I was given a choice of testing my "Shields" or "Ports"...I clicked on "Shields" became even more skeptical when I received this message:

"Preliminary Internet connection established! Your computer has accepted an anonymous connection from another machine it knows nothing about! (That's not good.) This ShieldsUP! web server has been permitted to connect to your computer's highly insecure NetBIOS File and Printer Sharing port (139). Subsequent tests conducted on this page, and elsewhere on this website, will probe more deeply to determine the extent of this system's vulnerability. But regardless of what more is determined, the presence and availability of some form of Internet

Server HAS BEEN CONFIRMED within this machine ... and it is accepting anonymous connections!"

The message continued to give the full details findings, or non-findings:

"The rest of this website explains the implications and dangers of your present configuration and provides complete and thorough instruction for increasing the security of this system. At the moment, any passing high speed Internet scanner will quickly spot this computer as a target for attack. The phrase you must remember is: "My port 139 is wide OPEN!" Unable to connect with NetBIOS to your computer. The attempt to connect to your computer with NetBIOS protocol over the Internet (NetBIOS over TCP/IP) FAILED. But, as you can see below, significant personal information is still leaking out of your system and is readily available to curious intruders. Since you do not appear to be sharing files or printers over the TCP/IP protocol, this system is relatively secure. It is exposing its NetBIOS names (see below) over the Internet, but it is refusing to allow connections, so it is unlikely that anyone could gain casual entry into your system due to its connection to the Internet. Several of your private names are being served up to the Internet by the Windows networking system. (see below) While it's unlikely that this information can be exploited, you should know what anyone can learn about you and your system."

But the kicker was that my User Name, my Computer's Name, and my Workgroup was identified on screen ...I knew I had to go to the next level and test my Ports. Here are the results of the Port testing:

It declared that my Port 80 (http) was open and that "having port 80 "open" as it is here causes intruders to wonder how much information you might be willing to give away."

The test program also found my Port 139 (Net BIOS) was open and I received this warning:

(Continued from page 2)

"As you probably know by now, the NetBIOS File Sharing port is the single largest security hole for networked Windows machines. The payoff from finding open Windows shares is so big that many scanners have been written just to find open ports like this one. Closing it should be a priority for you!"

Well, I must admit I was becoming a tad worried, but still I was skeptical towards the reality of these results. Next I wanted to run these test using my Zone Alarm Firewall operating. Here are the results of testing both my shields and ports:

On the Shield's test I got the same first "GREETINGS" message, only this time it did not contain my name. The results were amazingly secure. The Shield's UP test could not find my Port 139, nor was it able to connect with my NetBIOS to my computer. Here are the results of the Shield's test:

"Your Internet port 139 does not appear to exist! One or more ports on this system are operating in FULL STEALTH MODE! Standard Internet behavior requires port connection attempts to be answered with a success or refusal response. Therefore, only an attempt to connect to a nonexistent computer results in no response of either kind. But YOUR computer has DELIBERATELY CHOSEN NOT TO RESPOND (that's very cool!) which represents advanced computer and port stealthing capabilities. A machine configured in this fashion is well hardened to Internet NetBIOS attack and intrusion. Unable to connect with NetBIOS to your computer. All attempts to get any information from your computer have FAILED. (This is very uncommon for a Windows networking-based PC.) Relative to vulnerabilities from Windows net-working, this computer appears to be VERY SECURE since it is NOT exposing ANY of its internal NetBIOS networking protocol over the Internet."

My firewall came through with shining colours and with full security. Next was the Port test with the firewall operating. This test reported my Port 80 was open (http), however this is my connection to the net and my firewall blocks the incoming attacks as they are produced ... giving me the choice whether to accept or reject, but nothing comes through without my acceptance. So this warning is ok. The next warning I received was again concerning Port 139, this time I got the same message that it could not get through to this port and furthermore, "There is NO EVIDENCE WHATSOEVER that a port (or even any computer) exists at this IP address!"

Not a fraud, only success! My confidence in firewalls stands firm, sound and free of worry.

This article is brought to you by the Editorial Commit-tee of the Association of Personal Computer User Groups (APCUG), an international organization of which this group is a member. Borrowed from The Space Coast PC Journal, July, 2003 Edition.

Tips from the Internet
Compiled by Ron Ingraham
Space Coast PC Users Group

Windows Housekeeping

Learn these helpful keyboard tricks to work more quickly and efficiently-without using your mouse. Open My Computer: Windows-E. In versions prior to Win XP, <Windows-E> opens Windows Explorer, but the general idea behind this shortcut is that it lets you explore and manage your files easily.

Lock your computer and hide the screen: <Windows-L>. If Windows XP is set to use Fast User Switching, this will bring up the Welcome screen and wait for you to log on again. (You must reenter your password.) If your machine is not set to use the Welcome screen, or it's set to use the Welcome screen but not Fast User Switching, <Windows-L> will hide anything onscreen and bring up the Unlock Computer dialog box.

Learn What's Running

Many programs install themselves so they launch automatically at Windows start-up. Whether you need them or not, they're using memory and CPU cycles. Windows 98, Me, and XP users can disable unnecessary background programs using the Startup tab of the MSCONFIG program, which you can launch from the Start menu's Run dialog. Windows 2000 users will need a third-party tool, such as PC Magazine's Startup Cop utility.

Disabling anything listed in either MSCONFIG or

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Startup Cop should be safe. But keep in mind that if you disable the system tray, you'll lose the clock and volume control in the system tray. Also, one or more instances of LoadPowerProfile or TweakUI do no harm, because they don't remain in memory.

These tips are extracted from PC Magazine Tip of the Day, a service to which you may subscribe on your own. Go to http://www.pcmag.com and scroll down the opening page to the section where the free e-mail newsletters are listed. Select those of interest to you and enter the e-mail address in the box requesting it.

Borrowed from The Space Coast PC Journal, August, 2003

Quick Clicks

Using the scroll wheel of a mouse:
To enlarge script and some pictures, hit <CTRL> and Roll the scroll wheel.

Hoaxes

Centers for Disease Control & Prevention -
http://www.cdc.gov/hoax_rumors.htm
Provides health-related hoax and rumor information, and gives you the straight scoop on what is truth.

F-Secure -
http://www.datafellows.com/news/hoax.htm
A 'data security solutions provider," this company is the self-proclaimed industry-standard information source for new virus hoaxes and false alerts.

Hoax-Busters _
http://hoaxbusters.ciac.org
This site is a public service provided by the Computer Incident Advisory Capability (CIAC) and United States Department of the Treasury.

Symantec -
http://www.symantec.com/avcenter/hoax.html
From the manufacturers of Norton Anti-Virus software, makers of Internet security software, this site provides information about the most currently discovered hoax e-mails.

VMyths.com -
http://vmyths.com/hoax.cfm
Learn about computer virus myths, hoaxes, urban legends, hysteria, and the implications if you believe them. You can also search a list of computer virus hoaxes from A to Z.

Scams

Internet ScamBusters -
http://www.scambusters.com/
The #1 Source on Internet Fraud, scambusters provides articles, advice, and provides all kinds of information about current and past scams, and a forum for reporting them.
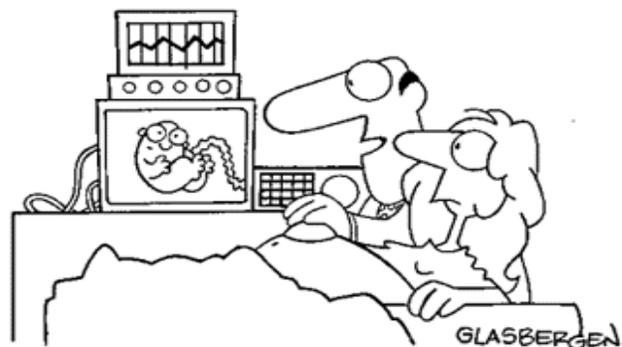
System Security

House Call-
http://housecall.anitvirus.com/
This free anti-virus software by Trend Micro was rated four out of five stars by PC magazine.

Borrowed from "Bytes & Bytes " Tampa Bay PC Club Newsletter, " Quick Clips"Column, July, 2003

"Your baby is developing very nicely. Would you like to send him an e-mail?"

"Just one of those days"

Little Bytes

SECRET GUIDES STILL AVAILABLE

A reminder for our new members and those more experienced members who haven't yet taken advantage of this really good buy. We are still making copies of "The Secret Guide to Computers" available to anyone who would like a 639 page reference manual for computing. At $15.00 a copy, you will be hard pressed to find a better source for answers to computer-related questions, whether you are new or experienced in the field. See Club Secretary Carl Henderson at any NOPCC meeting or SIG that he attends.

Submitted by Carl Henderson

WIRELESS / CELLULAR CD FOR REFERENCE

At NOPCC's July 2, 2003 meeting, Jerry Seregni, of WWL ran through his Powerpoint presentation on wireless computing rather quickly due to time constraints. He has sent the Club a CD containing the complete presentation plus other information about 3G cellular versus 802.11x wireless local area networking, Adobe Acrobat Reader 6.0, and the Microsoft Office Viewers for Word, Powerpoint, and Excel. Any Club member who would like to borrow the CD, see Club Secretary Carl Henderson to work out the details for returning it so others may borrow it. The material is copyrighted, so any use of the material other than viewing it would have to be worked out with Mr. Seregni.

Submitted by Carl Henderson

Compu-KISS Web Link

The NOPCC Board of Directors has approved the placement of a link on the club website to http://www.compukiss.com. This is the address of The Computer World—Keeping it Short and Simple web site. Check it out.

Submitted by Ray Paternostro

Froogle Search Engine

For a long time, Google has been one of the best search engines around. Now, Google offers Froogle. Froogle is a new service that helps you locate information about products for sale.

There are two ways to use Froogle: you can go to Google and then click the "Froogle" link on the Advanced Search page, or you can navigate directly to the site. Click here to go to Froogle. http://froogle.google.com/

Sue Whitehouse (EMazing Computer Corner Tip 4/5/03)

How does Froogle compare with other sites?

Froogle is unlike other sites both because of what it does and because of what it doesn't do. Froogle does provide a lightning quick way to search the largest collection of stores and products on the web. That means if the item you're looking to buy is online, Froogle will likely find it.

Froogle does not sell products or promote partner stores within the search results. There is no shopping cart or wallet into which you can place your credit card information. Nor are there preferred merchants who always show up as the first result regardless of what search you enter. Our job is to find the product you want and point you to the store that sells it. Froogle provides objective results based on our calculation of what's most relevant to your search. We don't accept payment for inclusion in our results themselves, and the advertising that appears to the right of the actual results is clearly labeled as "Sponsored Links."

Submitted by Virginia Kieran

You Know Your Living in 2003 when:

You just tried to enter your password on the microwave.

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into MailWasher Pro.

Once you have set up the e-mail account addresses, user ID's and passwords in MailWasher Pro, one click on the <Process Mail> button sends Mail-Washer Pro out to open these e-mail accounts. It then lists the e-mails residing in the e-mail accounts sorting them by account name. MailWasher Pro compares the from addresses on the e-mails against two pre-configured external blacklists: *"ORDB"* http://www.ordb.org/ and *"SPAM Cop"* http://www.spamcop.net/. E-mails that have addresses in these data bases have the block in the "Blacklist" column checked. You can select as an option in MailWasher Pro to Delete and/or Bounce Back e-mails on the Blacklist. Easy as 1-2-3.

An additional option is to place e-mail addresses from friends or sources from which you wish to receive e-mails into a "friends" list, with the option to not display them in MailWasher Pro when checking for SPAM. I like this feature as it allows me to concentrate on the Spam or possible Spam messages.

I have only had this application about a week, but have found it to be user friendly and very helpful. During that week I received two training e-mails with hints on how to improve and expand on my use of this excellent program. In the first educational e-mail came these tips on avoiding spam:

"When forwarding e-mail to groups of people, send the via the BCC field, this shields their address form others. Ask others to send e-mail to you this way."

"Be private. Do not give out you e-mail address in the first place. In many instances, if you are require to give an e-mail address in order to receive something off a website, give an e-mail address that you have set up to receive junk mail." *(Editor-I use my Hotmail account for this)*

"Treat every e-mail you preview as being of suspicious nature, many harmless looking e-mail with attachments may contain viruses. Many people succumbed to the "I love you" e-mail that contained a virus. *Use MailWasher Pro to preview your e-mail by double clicking on the e-mail."*

"Many spam messages have instructions at the bottom of the message asking you to reply to the message if you want to be remove from their mailing list. Don't do this, as it will only confirm that your address is valid and active and you will most likely be it with more spam. *Use MailWasher Pro to bounce the message back to the spammer so it looks as though your address is not valid."*

I can heartily recommend it if you are having spam problems. If you don't use ZoneAlarm's firewall program, you can obtain MailWasher Pro at: http://www.firetrust.com/. They allow free trial download. What have you got to lose but a lot of spam headaches.

Submitted by Edward Jahncke

TODAY'S WORD: UCE

UCE (unsolicited commercial e-mail) is a legal term used to describe an electronic promotional message sent to a consumer without the consumer's prior request or consent. In the vernacular, this kind of e-mail message is called spam. Since 1998, the Federal Trade Commission, a United States Federal agency whose purpose is to encourage free enterprise and prevent restraint of trade and monopolies, has collected an enormous database of UCE by asking users to forward unsolicited commercial e-mail to uce@ftc.gov. The Federal Trade Commission monitors UCE for three specific problems:
(1) deception in UCE content;
(2) economic and technological burdens on the Internet and delivery networks caused by the large volume of UCE being sent; and
(3) costs and frustrations imposed on consumers by their receipt of large amounts of UCE.
See the complete definition with hyperlinks at http://searchcio.techtarget.com/sDefinition/0,,sid19_gci915787,00.html

Submitted by Tom

FCC NO-Call Address:

Thought you might want this......it's the link for the National Do Not Call List.
http://www.donotcall.gov/default.aspx

Submitted by Don Herrmann

You Know Your Living in 2003 when:

Your grandmother asks you to send her a JPEG file of your newborn so she can create a screensaver.

Submitted by Jeanne Okamoto

NOPCC Directory

Elected Officers

President	Ray Paternostro	president@nopc.org	737-9099
Vice President	Ashton C. Mouton, Jr.	vp@nopc.org	246-7759
Secretary	Carl Henderson	secretary@nopc.org	466-3954
Treasurer	Don Herrmann	treasurer@nopc.org	831-1284
Director At Large	Louis G. Dutel, Jr.	director1@nopc.org	831-0055
Director At Large	Clarke Kissel	director2@nopc.org	828-5678
Director At Large	Albert Fox	director3@nopc.org	269-5786

Standing Committees

BBS SysOp	Lanny Goldfinch	sysop@nopc.org	482-5066
Newsletter Editor	Edward Jahncke	editor@nopc.org	897-1205
Public Relations	Jeannie Okamoto	pr@nopc.org	455-0977
Publicity	Jackie Elliott	publicity@nopc.org	455-6203
Webmaster	Manuel Dennis III	webmaster@nopc.org	835-7656

Special Interest Groups

Digital Media	Ray Paternostro	dm@nopc.org	737-9099
Genealogy	Bob Gordon	gene-m@nopc.org	469-4686
Internet	Ray Paternostro	internet-m@nopc.org	737-9099
New Users	Don Herrmann	new-user-m@nopc.org	831-1284
VBLG	Manuel Dennis III	vblg-owner@listbot.com	835-7656
Web Development	Ashton C. Mouton, Jr.	web@nopc.org	246-7759
WADSIG	Manuel Dennis III	wadsig-owner@listbot.com	835-7656
Web Lab	Sherrie K. Henne		913-5638

Other Important Numbers / Addresses

Club Hotline	Recorded messages. Meeting Information. Open 24 Hours	887-5746
NOPCC BBS	Bulletin Board System for members. The original way to PC communicate.	486-7249
NOPCC Web Site	On the World Wide Web. Our own home page and club information.	*www.nopc.org*

August 2003

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
					1	**2** Living w/Home Electronics WTIX 690AM 10a-11a
3 Computer Solutions 11a-12p WSMB 1350AM	**4 VBLG** McCann's 6:30p-8:30p	5	**6 NOPCC Mtg** J.D., Meisler Sch. 6:30p-9:00p	**7 Web SIG** McCann's 6:00p-9:00p	8	**9** Living w/Home Electronics WTIX 690AM 10a-11a
10 Computer Solutions 11a-12p WSMB 1350AM	**11 VBLG** McCann's 6:30p-8:30p	**12 Genealogy** McCann's 7:00p-8:30p	**13 NOPCC** B/Directors McCann's 6:30p	**14 Web Lab** McCann's 6:30p-8:30p	15	**16** Living w/Home Electronics WTIX 690AM 10a-11a
17 Computer Solutions 11a-12p WSMB 1350AM	**18 VBLG** McCann's 6:30p-8:30p	19	20	**21 New User's SIG** McCann's 6:30p—8:30p	22	**23** Living w/Home Electronics WTIX 690AM 10a-11a
24 Computer Solutions 11a-12p WSMB 1350AM	**25 VBLG** McCann's 6:30p-8:30p	26	**27 Digital Media** McCann's 7:00p-9:00p	**28 Internet SIG** McCann's 6:00p-9:00p	29	**30** Living w/Home Electronics WTIX 690AM 10a-11a
31 Computer Solutions 11a-12p WSMB 1350AM						

The New Orleans Personal Computer Club (NOPCC) is a private non-profit organization chartered under the State of Louisiana. Its purpose is to provide an open forum for discussion and education of the membership in the use and application of PCs, peripheral equipment and software. The opinions expressed in this newsletter are those of the author (s) and do not necessarily reflect those of the NOPCC , its members or its officers. The club does not verify for accuracy the articles in this newsletter and leaves verification of accuracy to its readers. Articles in this newsletter may be duplicated as long as credit is given to the author (s) and the NOPCC. Annual Dues Schedule: Regular Member, $40/yr.; Family Membership, $60/yr.; and Students (under 21) , $20/yr. Meetings are held at 6:30 on the 1st Wednesday of each month at J.D. Meisler Jr. High School on Cleary Avenue in Metairie, Louisiana.

New Orleans Personal Computer Club
P. O. Box 8364
Metairie, Louisiana 70011