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Posted At: Friday, May 14, 2004 1:30 AM  
Posted To: spywareworkshop2004  
Conversation: Spyware Workshop - Comment, P044509  
Subject: Spyware Workshop - Comment, P044509

I teach beginner computer users for our local adult ed and most of them are frequently overwhelmed by the technical details they have to master.

It's just not fair that they are nabbed unwittingly by things that will break their computers. Microsoft estimates that HALF of all the crash reports they receive are due to spy/adware. Dell says spyware-related problems are the number one reason that their customers call for technical support.

These people are using public resources (the internet "airwaves") to mislead and mistreat legitimate users. And they are paying NOTHING for the privilege --- instead WE are paying in grief, frustration, and diminished productivity.

I think they should be required to BOLDLY label the price of their "free" product in what they will do to you and your computer. It should be prominently displayed right up there with all the "goodies" you're getting AND there should be a check box that says, "yes, I want you to (whatever it's going to do) as well as give me this free program".

Of course, with all those lawyers involved, people probably still won't understand what it is they're agreeing to, but it might make them a little suspicious, which isn't such a bad idea.

EXCEPT for legitimate businesses, who would benefit if more people trusted the internet. So, the spy/adware folks are making it harder for not only recreational users who download "free" stuff, but also for legitimate businesses.

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OR