

Online Safety Lab III

CS 102

Sept. 26, 2005

Name(s)

Introduction

This lab will help us discover:

1. How pervasive e-mail spam is, what tools are available for blocking it, and what you can do to limit your exposure to it.
2. How long it can take to clear your name once your identity has been stolen, how vulnerable we are to identity theft, the importance of examining your credit reports once a year for signs of identity theft, and what you should do if you become a victim of identity theft.
3. Three good, free spyware detection programs.

A side aim of this lab is to sharpen your search skills on the Web. In some cases, this lab leads you to a specific Web site, but you may have to dig around to get the information you need by following links from the Web page where you've started. In other cases, you may have to use Google.

Lab

1. Visit *ConsumerReports.org — E-mail Spam* at http://www.consumerreports.org/main/detailv2.jsp?CONTENT%3C%3Ecnt_id=322715 (use the *HTML* version of this lab handout, available on the class Web site, so you don't have to type this long Web address) and answer these questions:
 - (a) What was the largest number of spam e-mails blocked by America Online in a single day in 2002?

(b) Do e-mail programs provide any protection from spam? Is it possible to improve upon this?

(c) If you have an e-mail account with Yahoo or Hotmail, can you do anything to limit the amount of spam you receive?

(d) How do spammers discover your e-mail address?

2. Visit *ConsumerReports.org* — *Protect Yourself Online* at http://www.consumerreports.org/main/detailv4.jsp?CONTENT%3C%3Ecnt_id=461187 and answer these questions:

(a) If you want to limit the amount of spam you receive, what are the three most important mistakes to avoid?

(b) How can you keep your operating system up-to-date?

(c) In what way should you be careful when closing a pop-up ad window?

3. Visit *ConsumerReports.org — Identity Theft* at http://www.consumerreports.org/main/detailv2.jsp?CONTENT%3C%3Ecnt_id=329201 and answer these questions:

- (a) If your identity is stolen, how long will it take to clear your name?

- (b) As far as identity theft goes, are Washington, D. C. and Maryland safe places to live?

- (c) Residents of what seven states are entitled to receiving a free annual credit report from each of the three big credit bureaus? Has this changed recently? (Hint: It won't be in this online article. What have you heard recently in the news?)

- (d) What should you do if you become a victim of identity theft?

4. Spybot Search & Destroy (<http://www.spybot.info/en/home/index.html>), Ad-Aware (<http://www.lavasoftusa.com/software/adaware/>), and Microsoft Windows AntiSpyware (<http://www.microsoft.com/athome/security/spyware/software/default.msp>) are three good, free spyware detection programs. Visit the three Web sites, compare the products, and describe which one is better and why.