Online Safety Lab III

CS 102

Feb. 22, 2006

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 you 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 a search engine.

Lab

1. Visit *ConsumerReports.org — Protect Yourself Online* at
   `http://www.consumerreports.org/cro/electronics-computers/`
   `laptop-desktop-computers/protect-yourself-online-905/overview.htm`
   (*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) Do e-mail programs such as Microsoft Outlook provide any protection from spam? Is it possible to improve upon this by purchasing add-on software?

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

(c) Are the free screensavers and free toolbars that you can download from many Web sites a good value? Why or why not?

(d) On average, how many pieces of spam e-mail did AOL block per day in 2005? What percentage of the e-mail received was spam? (Use a search engine to find these answers.)

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

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

(g) Is the US Can-Spam Act of 2003 an effective deterrent against spam?

2. 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) What fairly inexpensive tool can you buy to help thwart "dumpster divers?"

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

3. 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.mspx`) (renamed Windows Defender) are three good, free spyware detection programs. Visit the three Web sites, compare the products, and describe which one you think is better and why.

4. I recently performed a Google search with the key words `free antispyware`. One of the top "Sponsored Links" was for a product called NoAdware. Research this product and tell me about it. (Warning and hint: do **not** download this software. What does this tell you about Google's Sponsored Links?)