

News from the Anti-Virus Front

The thing about the people who write viruses and put them out there on the Internet is that they're always one step ahead of the people who write the definition files to help protect your PC.

At WebDispatch we get a tremendous number of infected PCs to clean each week. It also means that we get to see some of the newer/latest tactics the people who write viruses are using to infect you and cause you damage and frustration.

On the good news side, a lot of our customers are learning how to avoid being re-infected although there are some exceptions.

On the bad news side:

- 1) We're seeing viruses for Macs. These follow the central pattern we've seen with viruses written for the PC/Windows systems. They're trying to scare you into giving up a credit card. At the moment, these Mac Viruses are primitive when compared to the ones infecting PC/Windows system but can expect variations and an uptick in sophistication in the near future.
- 2) In the past several weeks in the PC realm, we've been seeing viruses that "hide" your document folders; making you think your files have been deleted. However, hiding files is a pretty standard feature and what is hidden can be unhidden.
- 3) These new PC viruses are also outright "deleting" your program shortcuts (at least in the XP system; in the Vista and Windows 7 systems, they are merely being hidden.) In reality, the XP shortcuts aren't being "deleted" however they are being moved to temporary folders of which there seems to be no set pattern.
- 4) The idea that these viruses are impacting on user files, folders, and shortcuts is alarming. It's possible that the next wave of viruses might actually start deleting things for real.

Strong Recommendation:

Backup your system on weekly basis. Preferably do what's known as an Image Backup which backups everything which could take you back to a point in time just prior to a rogue infection and whatever damage such an infection might inflict. At the very least, backup your data files, pictures, music, email and any files that you don't want to lose.