

Popular software may be monitoring your habits and slowing your PC

by Doug Bedell

The Dallas Morning News

When Roger Olney used the KaZaA file-sharing service to download a utility for his home computer, he got a rude introduction to the slippery world of spyware.

First, he mistakenly downloaded and installed a file called eblaster.exe.

"I am aware now after some research that eblaster is a program that monitors keystrokes (gulp) in super stealth mode (shiver, double gulp)," Olney told members of the discussion group alt.privacy.spyware, where he turned for emergency help.

But, as group members would later inform him, the KaZaA Media Desktop program itself was already monitoring much of Olney's activity.

Unbeknownst to most users, Sharman Networks Ltd.'s KaZaA--the world's most popular post-Napster file-sharing program, has built-in software that spies on its users.

KaZaA is partnered with Brilliant Digital, which makes software that is downloaded and invisibly installed with KaZaA Media Desktop.

Also, Brilliant's software automatically hooks users into yet another network, Altnet, which can track behavior as well as store and retrieve targeted banner ads and pop-ups.

It even seeks to profit from siphoning off processing power from its customers' computers.

Last year, the revelation that Brilliant's software had been piggybacking on KaZaA led to some consumer backlash. Technically, the Altnet program could be called adware, tracking software that users agree to download as part of the End User License Agreements. But EULAs are so filled with legal jargon that they're largely unread.

Many KaZaA users protested that Brilliant's tactics qualify it as spyware, software that monitors users without

only about 30 commercially available spyware programs -- mostly monitoring software used by spouses, parents and corporations.

Today, after expanding SpyCop's reach to include adware, McKenzie's database encompasses more than 350 monitoring programs.

"It's a huge industry now," McKenzie said. "Let's face it. There's big bucks in getting people's attention, and people willingly partake of these programs. Then suddenly they notice they're getting pop-ups all over their computers when they visit certain Web sites."

McKenzie's company sells SpyCop for \$49.95, but free adware/spyware scanners are also available. They include Ad-Aware by Lavasoft (www.lavasoft.de), which last year won PC World Magazine's top award for software.

Ad-Aware has become an indispensable tool for many savvy computer repairers. Increasingly, users are complaining about problems directly attributable to adware and spyware.

F. Lee Pyles, owner of Compyles Computers in Rowlett, Texas, says it has become commonplace to find dozens of monitoring software installations on machines he repairs. Often, these programs run in the background, invisibly sapping processing power.

"I had one the other day that had more than 125 executable files that Ad-Aware found," Pyles said. "It was running like a dog. No sooner had I removed all that stuff and it was like I'd released the emergency brake on a car. It just came back to life."

Some monitoring software programs are almost impossible to uninstall. They may contain fake uninstallation components that trick users into reinstalling, rather than deleting them.

"Other times, you'll try to uninstall and they'll want you to take a survey, or they ask you, 'Why are you leaving?'" said Pyles. "Others will try and

Top industries for fresh job seekers

by Shawn Langlois
CBS MarketWatch

The job market for recent college graduates is as brutal as it has been in two decades, but industries poised to capitalize on the aging population and the uncertainty facing the nation still offer ample opportunity.

In a survey conducted by the National Association of Colleges and Employers, companies expect to hire 3.6 percent fewer graduates than they did a year earlier.

"It's going to be very tough out there this year," said John Challenger, chief executive of outplacement firm Challenger, Gray & Christmas. "There are lots of rejection notices out there."

An estimated 1.3 million college graduates are due to hit the pavement this spring in an attempt to join a U.S. workforce that numbers about 135 million.

But with turnover rates highest at entry-level positions, the jobs are certainly there, Challenger said. Knowing where to look is the key.

Here are the strongest professions job experts say are worth considering right out of college:

Healthcare. Aging baby boomers should provide plenty of opportunity for caregivers like pharmacists, physical therapists, audiologists, etc. There are currently 126,000 open nursing positions, according to report by HotJobs.com, while many currently employed nurses are nearing retirement age.

Insurance. The greater the uncertainty, the greater the need for insurance. Agents, adjusters, researchers and many more positions should stay in demand. Average salaries range from nearly \$20,000 up to almost \$85,000.

Biotechnology/Drugs. As baby boomers move deeper into their golden years, the demand for prescriptions drugs will pick up. Challenger also expects opportunities to grow as more money is dedicated to gene research. Affymetrix and Applera are examples of two companies on the forefront of genomics.

Financial services. Financial planners stand to gain from investors looking to forego their company-sponsored 401k and take control of their own savings. Additionally, mortgage brokers should continue to cash in on record low inter-

est rates and the nesting effect.

Education. Another sector that stands to flourish as more and more people prepare to exit the workforce is education. "There are a lot of educators approaching their retirement dates," said Christopher Jones, vice president of content at HotJobs.com.

Energy. With the Iraq and the Middle East in turmoil, the need for alternative energy sources has never been more apparent. Not only will there be an increasing demand for research and development, but workers will be needed in marketing, sales, accounting, etc.

While job availability in the high-tech arena is scarce relative to previous years, pockets of strength still remain.

"Technology is immense," said Jones. "In fact, there are some others where we've seen only growth, like security specialists, for instance."

With the proliferation of hacked databases and the need to protect their information, this job title should stay popular for a while.

Some of the leaders in this field include Network Associates, RSA Security and Symantec.

There are also opportunities in software sales, according to Edwin Pollock, regional president at job placement firm Bernard Haldane Associates.

"Sales is probably the biggest opening we're seeing right now," he said. "Of course, many of these companies are still laying off lots of high-salaried people from the dot-com revolution."

Pollock suggested job seekers look to viable companies that have reduced their workforce considerably, as they would be the most likely to replace workers "at a more reasonable compensation."

"Microsoft is doing great things with how they're hiring grads," said Challenger. "The best people looking for the best people."

Finally, Pollock offered this bit of advice should the search come to a grinding halt: "Go to the company you want to work for and volunteer to work for nothing, offer your services as an intern or whatever you want to call it."

"If you're good, the company will find a spot for you."

Student puts seat in popular law-school class up for grabs on eBay

by Jennifer Peltz
South Florida Sun-Sentinel

Nova Southeastern University prides itself on teaching entrepreneurship and offering what a magazine survey called the nation's most technologically wired law school.

So when first-year law student Ryan Vescio put himself a spot in prominent professor Bruce Rogow's coveted constitutional law II class next fall, what did he do?

Put it up for auction on eBay. "Rogow's Constitutional Law 2 Class" appeared this week on the virtual auction block, sandwiched between AA batteries and a commemorative stamp panel.

Vescio offered to trade classes with

"the lucky winner" of a semester with Rogow, known for representing the Palm Beach County Canvassing Board in the 2000 presidential election dispute and celebrity lawyer F. Lee Bailey in his disbarment, among other high-profile clients.

The auction was, Vescio says, intended just to lighten the mood at a school cleaved with pre-exam tension.

"We study about all these serious, stem topics, and everybody, I think, needs to just have a joke now and then," said Vescio, 23, who grew up in Melbourne, Fla., and graduated from the University of Central Florida last year.

But to Vescio's surprise, some fellow students took his joke seriously. The offer drew 19 bids of up to \$225 before the law school administration told Vescio

Wednesday to cease and desist. He promptly did.

"We were impressed by the entrepreneurial nature of it, but offended... that this is making a mockery of what is a serious attempt to create equal opportunities to take classes," said associate dean Pat Jason.

Rogow couldn't be reached Thursday. eBay generally would stop a sale such as Vescio's, questioning whether the seller truly owned the item and could deliver it in eBay's required 30 days, said spokesman Kevin Purselove. But with about 12 million items for sale in a given day, the online auction service often doesn't spot a questionable offer until alerted to it, he said.

KaZaA vs. Napster

Internet media-sharing programs usually use a form of peer-to-peer technology to allow users to swap files

Napster had a central computer that indexed music files available for sharing, making it an easy target for shut-down by the record industry in 2001

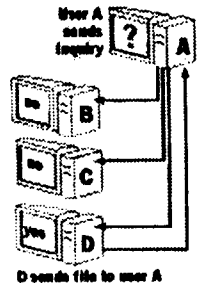
KaZaA moves indexing around to users' computers, which act as "supernodes"; disconnecting one computer won't stop the network

How KaZaA works

KaZaA Media Desktop (KMD) users connect to each other directly, rather than going through a central control point

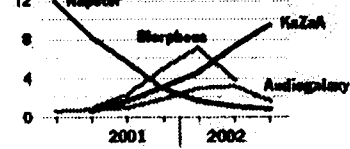
Users can:

- Search for content that is shared by other users
- Peer-to-peer searches occur through users with fast connections
- Once file is located, download it from user who has it
- Create files and distribute them using KaZaA's software



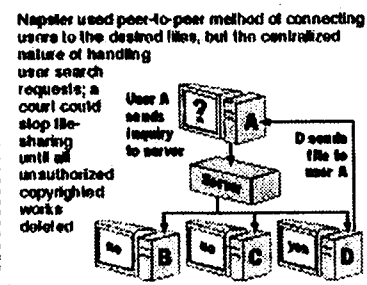
Winning and losing programs

Millions of unique U.S. users, quarterly



How Napster worked

When searching for files via the old Napster peer-to-peer network, users connected to a central computer that searched through available files on the user network



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asking permission. The EULA language is 5,000 words long and almost incoherent, they argue.

One programmer even developed KaZaA Lite (www.kazaalite.com), which is KaZaA without Altnet.

Still, more than 60 million users worldwide have installed the KaZaA Media Desktop. Most are unaware that their machines can track their behavior and hook into Altnet.

"The masses are being victimized all the time," says Grey McKenzie, CEO of SpyCop Inc. (www.spycop.com), makers of a program that detects spy and adware. "I think you now have to protect yourself against these programs, just like you scan for viruses."

Spyware and adware are being increasingly used by programmers to make money. When McKenzie started his company three years ago, for example, SpyCop's database recognized

take you to their Web site. And they'll never completely clean out the directories they create. You've got to do that manually."

Much of the modern adware and spyware programming is poor quality, says McKenzie.

"It messes up your computer big time, and who's to know?" he said. "If people realize that this kind of stuff is going on, maybe something will happen."

Perhaps popular spots such as Download.com will some day become spy- and adware free zones, he says. But until consumers encounter widespread identity theft or machinery problems, McKenzie holds little hope for reform.

"You've got an epidemic here," McKenzie said. "This kind of programming gives an 8-year-old the ability to become a seasoned hacker. And that's just scary."

Stetson University paper shut down after profanity-laced April Fool's issue

by Tania deLuzuriaga
The Orlando Sentinel

One of the state's oldest college newspapers was shut down this week and the entire editorial staff fired after publishing a profanity-filled April Fool's Day issue that included racist jokes and a sex column advocating rape and domestic violence.

Stetson University on Wednesday suspended publication of its student newspaper The Reporter for the rest of the school year. Members of its staff said they were given 15 minutes to clear their belongings out of the office as the locks were being changed.

The Reporter, which the school boasts was the state's first college newspaper after its founding in 1887, has had an annual tradition of poking fun at the faculty, student groups and itself with an April Fool's edition renamed The Distorter.

But school officials say the students went too far.

"There's not much in this year's Distorter that you can laugh about," Michelle Espinosa, dean of students, said Thursday. "We believe very strongly in students' need for autonomy. But the students do assume responsibility for their editorial decisions."

Ironically, the mock edition's lead story claimed the student staff was shutting down the paper because they were tired of producing it. "We Quit!" screams the headline in red across the front of the paper. But it was the ar-

ticles inside that got the most attention. The Howard Thurman lecture series, designed to promote racial dialogue,

was satirized with an article about a racist Civil War enthusiast drinking beer at the podium, and the weekly sex column was written in Ebonics. The paper also included fake advertisements such as one for a spray that "kills townies dead" and another featuring profanity in giant block letters. "Because we are allowed to print it," it said.

"We pushed some buttons that may not have needed to be pushed," sex columnist August Brown said Thursday. The newspaper had been under pressure from the administration to tone down the content of recent editions. After the April 1 edition, school officials said they were "inundated" with calls and e-mails from upset alumni, faculty and students.

Several students at the campus Thursday said they thought the punishment exceeded the crime.

"It was a little offensive, but it was obviously a joke," said Liz Burdett, a Stetson freshman majoring in international business. "What happened to the First Amendment?"

Because Stetson is a private institution, it can restrict what the student newspaper publishes, said Mark Goodman, executive director of the Student Press Law Center in Arlington, Va.

"If this happened at a public university, there's no question it would have been a First Amendment issue," he said. However, he questioned the ethics involved in the university's decision, say-

ing it raises serious questions about the university's commitment to freedom of speech.

"There are good reasons that policy isn't allowed at public institutions," he said. "Just because it's legal doesn't make it right."

However, university officials said that just because the First Amendment allows freedom of expression doesn't mean it's ethical to print just anything. "Having the right and having the responsibility to use that right are two different things," Espinosa said. "It's a violation of the mission statement and ethical guidelines described under the parameters of the university."

She said school officials would be remiss in their duties as educators if they didn't make students aware of the effect their articles have.

"We have to consider the community of people that read our newspaper," Espinosa said. "We don't feel that a university setting is the appropriate forum for that type of writing."

"We've learned a lot in the last week as students and journalists," said former editor-in-chief Teresa Schwarz. "I think that's something they're overlooking."

Stetson's administrators will work with student leaders over the summer to start a new student newspaper in the fall, Espinosa said. The former staff members may reapply and will be considered for re-hiring, she said.

"Each case will be determined on an individual basis," she said