Hosed!

What Happens When You Surf Unprotected

Greetings beloved PCCupid Clients,

Let’s be clear, I did not write a word of this PCWorld article. PCWorld is a well-respected magazine and online source for viable computer information. I found its content most important in today’s home computing/internet environment. I simply wanted to pass this information along to you. You can find the full online article here at this web address: <http://www.pcworld.com/article/206107/most_dangerous_places_on_the_web.html>

* *Your PCCupid, Keith Lawton*

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**11:45 a.m.** I start the experiment with a pristine, clean PC running Windows Vista.

**11:55 a.m.** I need to check my e-mail. I download what appears to be a résumé file. Strange, I'm not hiring. I open it anyway. My screen flickers a little, but nothing starts. Hmm...

**12:00 p.m.** I start poking around on the Web, and start out easy. I run a Google search for free smilies, and sure enough, I find some. Who am I to refuse?

**12:29 p.m.** A couple smiley packs later, I am up to three browser toolbars. Junkware, but no malware...yet.

**12:41 p.m.** I download some random freebie antivirus software I've never heard of. Let's see what this does...

**12:48 p.m.** More random downloads, and my desktop is getting junked up. I now have icons for free games and 1000 free songs littered all over, plus more browser toolbars than I care to have.

**12:55 p.m.** IE is hating me right now. Still no signs of malware, but something's sure eating up system resources.

**1:03 p.m.** My PC locks up for a few moments.

**1:25 p.m.** After a restart, Windows throws up a warning about a program at C:\Users\PCW\AppData\Roaming\host32.exe. I have no idea what it is.

**1:40 p.m.** I think I killed IE. I can't launch it. Malware? But I uninstall a couple of toolbars, and it seems to work again.

**3:00 p.m.** It's unclear whether I've gotten infected by anything on the Web, but so far I haven't done anything too terribly risky. However, I've got to check my e-mail again; I'm expecting an important file from a friend.

**3:05 p.m.** Whoops. I think I clicked on the wrong file. I've got fake antivirus!

**3:25 p.m.** I now have three or four fake antivirus programs running. Malware has also planted three shortcut links to porn sites on my desktop. And whenever I open something in IE, a fake antivirus app kicks in with a fake warning.

**4:13 p.m.** Something just forced my PC to shut down and restart. I think I've successfully hosed this computer.