

Re: Adcaster – argh

Source: <http://www.derkeiler.com/Newsgroups/microsoft.public.security/2004-03/1888.html>

From: N. Miller (*nsm_at_blackhole.aosake.net*)

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In article <14e1401c41489\$11f2dae0\$a101280a@phx.gbl>, anonymous@discussions.microsoft.com says...

- > *Does anyone know how to block Adcaster? Apparently it's*
- > *a program that spammers can purchase that sends pop-up*
- > *ads via Windows Messenger to known IP addresses. (I'm no*
- > *expert, this is just how I'm understanding it...could be*
- > *inaccurate.)*

I don't have a definitive list of the names, but there are three types of messenger. MSN Messenger is an add-on instant messaging client which runs under all 32-bit versions of Windows, at least from Win98 on. Then there is the Windows Messenger IM client which comes with Windows XP; similar to the MSN Messenger, and using the same IM servers. Last there is the Windows Messenger Service, which listens on port 135, and sometimes the lower ephemeral ports, starting at 1024 up to about 1030; I think.

It sounds at first like the last one; Windows Messenger Service.

- > *For some reason, it only affects me when I've dialed in*
- > *through AOL and have their software running. My other*
- > *non-AOL dialup and IE don't seem to open it up to*
- > *problems for some reason.*

It very well could be that your non-AOL ISP is blocking external access to port 135 at their border routers. AOL probably doesn't block inbound on that port.

- > *I've searched for months trying to find the answer to*
- > *blocking it, and come up empty. But this article states*
- > *that it's a simple fix (would have been nicer if they'd*
- > *stated what the fix was!):*

Google on "Windows Messenger Service"; in just a couple of milliseconds you will find more information than you thought possible.

- > *"One of Rines' latest ventures is Adcaster Extreme, a*
- > *software program that broadcasts pop-up ads to Windows*

- > *computers running the Messenger service. He claims the*
- > *technology isn't like e-mail spamming, because PC users*
- > *can turn off a feature in Windows to block the pop-ups."*
- > <http://www.wired.com/news/print/0,1294,60714,00.html>

Spammers are sociopaths, who tell themselves all kinds of lies to justify their activities. Unfortunately, the Internet is one place where government authority does not seem able to rein in sociopathic behavior. Because most of the Internet is about information, and not actual physical assault, freedom of speech tends to trump restraint. I don't know, yet, whether that is a good thing, or a bad thing. But you need to know more about the technology that most people wish to learn, if you want to stay ahead of the 21st century's counterparts to the 19th century's snake oil peddlers.

> *Any help would be very much appreciated.*

Here is the result of the above mentioned Google search:

<http://www.google.com/search?q=windows+messenger+service>

Ignore the MSN Messenger Version 6.1 links, they are for the IM service.

If you are running a personal firewall, you could block inbound packets on port 135. Or just follow the directions to disable it. If you were not on a dial-up service, a hardware router would automatically block unrequested packets. There are only a couple of such devices that work with dial-up modems at a reasonable price, last time I checked. Without a router between your computer and the Internet, turning off the service is your only real hope.

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Norman

~Win dain a lotica, En vai tu ri, Si lo ta
~Fin dein a loluca, En dragu a sei lain
~Vi fa-ru les shutai am, En riga-lint