

Re: windows messenger

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In article <032401c3472b\$7a1d1d00\$a501280a@phx.gbl>, "Julie"

<someday_lily@msn.com> wrote:

>How do I remove the Windows message system that allows
>random messages in the gray boxes to pop up? This is one
>aspect of Windows XP I despise. I was more secure with
>old Windows 95! Thanks for any helpful reply.

Well, no, you weren't more secure with Windows 95, you just weren't aware that people were able to probe your system and send it packets that had effects.

That sounds a bit like a smart–arse reply, so I'll explain. The Messenger Service (which is not "Windows Messenger") is a component that displays messages to your screen when it receives them. It's designed to be used by system components and network peers who need to get instant messages to you – for instance, your network admin is about to pull the plug leading to your branch, and wants everyone there to have a warning. Or another example is that your antivirus program is trying to tell you that it's found something of interest.

Okay, so it's useful, but it's obviously annoying you that anyone and everyone can send messages to your Messenger Service, rather than just local people. Think a moment on that. The Messenger Service isn't the only part of your system that listens for network requests – one such service is that responsible for sharing files among other people on your network. Are you worried that this portion of your system is receiving data from anyone and everyone?

The answer is not to go through your system and stop or delete all services that have network access, because that essentially removes your ability to do anything across the network. The answer is to install / enable a firewall into your network, so that data from the Internet reaches you only if you asked for it.

A set of instructions on this can be found here:

<http://support.microsoft.com/?id=330904>

microsoft.public.windowsxp.security_admin: Re: windows messenger

>*Microsoft, you've hurt yourselves with this feature.*

>*Your customers are quite unhappy.*

Sure, but mostly because you don't understand the full consequences underlying this issue. The Messenger Service is acting here kind of like a 'canary', letting you know that your system is open to incoming packets. Close the hole – install the firewall – and you won't see anything more from the Messenger Service, except for local messages. Oh, one further point, you'll also find that the Messenger Service is worth keeping around, because it'll do its canary act again if your firewall ever fails, or becomes compromised.

Alun.

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