

## Re: Microsoft Messenger Service Bulletin

**Source:**

[http://www.derkeiler.com/Newsgroups/microsoft.public.windowsxp.security\\_admin/2003-12/3951.html](http://www.derkeiler.com/Newsgroups/microsoft.public.windowsxp.security_admin/2003-12/3951.html)

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**Date:** 12/23/03

Date: Mon, 22 Dec 2003 20:30:32 -0700

Greetings --

No, it isn't a legitimate "Microsoft" warning, although the potential threat is real, and you're obviously unprotected. It's simply an unscrupulous advertiser trying to panic you into unnecessarily buying their "service." Any and all patches you need are available free of cost from Microsoft.

This type of spam has become quite common over the past year, and unintentionally serves as a valid security "alert." It demonstrates that you haven't been taking sufficient precautions while connected to the Internet. Your data probably hasn't been compromised by these specific advertisements, but if you're open to this exploit, you may well be open to other threats, such as the Blaster Worm that recently swept across the Internet. Install and use a decent, properly configured firewall. (Merely disabling the messenger service, as some people recommend, only hides the symptom, and does almost nothing to truly secure your machine.) And ignoring or just "putting up with" the security gap represented by these messages is particularly foolish.

Messenger Service of Windows

<http://support.microsoft.com/default.aspx?scid=KB;en-us;168893>

Messenger Service Window That Contains an Internet Advertisement Appears

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

Blocking Ads, Parasites, and Hijackers with a Hosts File

<http://www.mvps.org/winhelp2002/hosts.htm>

Oh, and be especially wary of people who advise you to do nothing more than disable the messenger service. Disabling the messenger service, by itself, is a "head in the sand" approach to computer security. The real problem is not the messenger service pop-ups; they're actually providing a useful, if annoying, service by acting as a security alert. The true problem is the unsecured computer, and

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you've been advised to merely turn off the warnings. How is this helpful?

Bruce Chambers

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<http://dts-l.org/goodpost.htm>

<http://www.catb.org/~esr/faq/smart-questions.html>

You can have peace. Or you can have freedom. Don't ever count on having both at once. -- RAH

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