

Tens of Thousands of Users May Lose Access to Internet Due To Computer Virus

April 23, 2012 - A program known as DNS Changer may be about to turn your world upside down. The program disables antivirus software and it redirects internet traffic to bogus servers used to look up domain names on the internet. Although the FBI has managed to catch the criminals behind the program, and to stop any further propagation of it, there were at least 500,000 computers that were infected with it before it could be stopped. And there are still tens of thousands of people whose computers still have a problem. As of July 9th, anyone who has not fixed their computer will find that they no longer have an internet connection.

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var s = document.createElement('SCRIPT'), s1 = document.getElementsByTagName('SCRIPT')[0];  
s.type = 'text/javascript';  
s.src = 'http://widgets.digg.com/buttons.js';  
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})();
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})();
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DNS servers are what make the internet work. They allow us to type in a domain name, such as Google.com, and have the sight magically appear on our web browsers. Without these servers, you would actually have to memorize the IP addresses - a string of 12 numbers - for every website you visit. You can honestly say that DNS servers are the backbone of the internet.

The DNS Changer program simply reroutes your internet traffic from a real DNS server to a bogus server. That bogus server does everything that the real server does and more. Yes, you can still visit your favorite sites. But you are also likely to be seeing a lot more advertising. And the servers can also be used to introduce new computer viruses and Trojan horses to you computer; stealing your most valuable personally identifiable information.

When the FBI became aware of the program, they originally planned to arrest the suspects and shut their network down. But that plan was quickly scrapped when they began to understand the scope of the problem. Shutting down the bogus servers would have left more than half a million people worldwide without any internet connection at all.

So the FBI setup two bogus DNS servers of its own. On the night they shut down the criminal network responsible for DNS Changer, they turned on their own servers to take the place of those operated by the criminals. This has allowed the infected users to continue to use the web. But on July 9th, those FBI servers will be shut down.

That presents a problem for a lot of people. Most of those who still operate infected computers don't know that they have a problem. And the only sign that they may be infected is likely to be that their system is slow. That's not all that uncommon, especially on older systems.

The FBI is urging internet users to check their computers using a website specifically setup for the DNS Changer infection. That site can be found at <http://www.dcwg.org>. It provides resources for checking your computer and to repair it if you find a problem. It only takes a few minutes of your time and could save you a lot of heartache. We're advising all of our readers to check their computers now, while they still have time.

If you do find that you have a problem, as soon as your computer is fixed you should also reinstall your antivirus software and make sure that the virus definitions are up to date. Then run a complete system scan to make sure you don't have any other issues.

byJim Malmberg

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