Time to Uninstall Avast Antivirus Software If You Value Your Privacy

January 28, 2020 - Most people install antivirus for protection. They are trying keep their private information… well… private. They want to make sure that their computers aren't hijacked by malware and that their files aren't subject to be read. And most would expect that rather than tracking their internet browsing, their antivirus software might make that kind of tracking more difficult. But according to a report published in Vice, anyone using Avast for their antivirus software may be getting just the opposite of what they expect.

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Avast Antivirus is attractive to a lot of computer users because it is free to use. That's given the company a large base of customers… more than 400 million to be precise. But "free to use" doesn't mean that it's free. The company has to make money somehow, and to accomplish that they have apparently decided to sell data on browsing habits.

According to the report, the data being sold is first anonymized. But researchers are saying that it would be possible to reconstruct the data to identify individual users.

The data being offered for sale is highly precise and concerned Google and Mozilla enough that both companies removed Avast's browser plug-ins from their web stores. But report states that the company continues to gather and sell the data through its antivirus program, which is a stand-alone program that isn't reliant on any browser.

Based on this, ACCESS is advising users to uninstall Avast Antivirus on any device they may have installed it on. To us it seems like a complete betrayal of trust to when a program that is installed for protection is used in this manner, without requiring some very conspicuous form of opt-in.
by Jim Malmberg
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