

Threat Track Security

Ouroboros

Christopher Boyd - Senior Threat Researcher
Jovi Umawing - Communications & Research Analyst

Ouroboros

An ancient symbol depicting a serpent or dragon eating its own tail

- Used to symbolise cyclicality it is never ending
- Eats its own tail, destroying itself to create life
- Now you don't need to Google it



Old is the New "New"

- "Printers contain hardcoded backdoor account" 2012
- "Laser printers encode pages with identifying information" 2005
- "Street gangs use Twitter to trash talk rivals" 2009
- "Netbangers" use web services to communicate 2006
- "Google files facial password patent" 2013
- "Passwords may be thing of the past" 2007
- "PRISM scours the web" 2013
- "Government spyware" 2005
- "Charlatans exaggerate mobile malware threat" 2011
- "Mobile viruses greatly exaggerated" 2005



Way Back When...

The Problem

- Adware / Spyware wasn't being addressed by traditional AV
- Threat of legal action all of a sudden, the "bad guys" had lawyers
- Numerous attempts to combat the antispyware industry

The Solution

- An explosion of support forums training grassroots infection removal
- Numerous independent researchers and their blogs
- Smaller firms / programs dedicated to tackling Ad/Spyware

The Problem

Nobody understood what we were doing



THE KEY PLAYERS



The Key Players

Zango (1999 - 2009)

- Adware applications, gateways display advertisements to view or access content online
- Notification issues, affiliate problems, gave up \$3 million in 2006 for ill gotten gains via an FTC settlement
- Numerous attempts to combat the antispyware industry

Direct Revenue (2002 - 2007)

- Notorious pieces of Adware, including Nail.exe and Aurora
- A "Department of the Dark Arts" responsible for new types of Adware
- Aggressively pursued researchers: legal threats, private detectives
- Settled with the FTC for \$1.5 million in 2007



Main Areas of Concern: 2005 -2008

Adware Installs

- Standalone executables / Browser Plugins / Active-X
- Bundles (some legit, some blackhat)
- Content Gateways

Infection Channels

- Social Networks (Myspace & similar) (Standalones, plugins, gateways)
- Ad Networks and affiliates (Drive-by, exploits, scam sites)
- P2P, IM worms, Botnets (Bundles, cracked / tampered standalones)



Main Areas of Concern: 2009 -2013

Adware Installs

- Standalone executables / Browser Plugins / Surveys
- Bundles (mostly legit, some blackhat)
- Content Gateways

Infection Channels

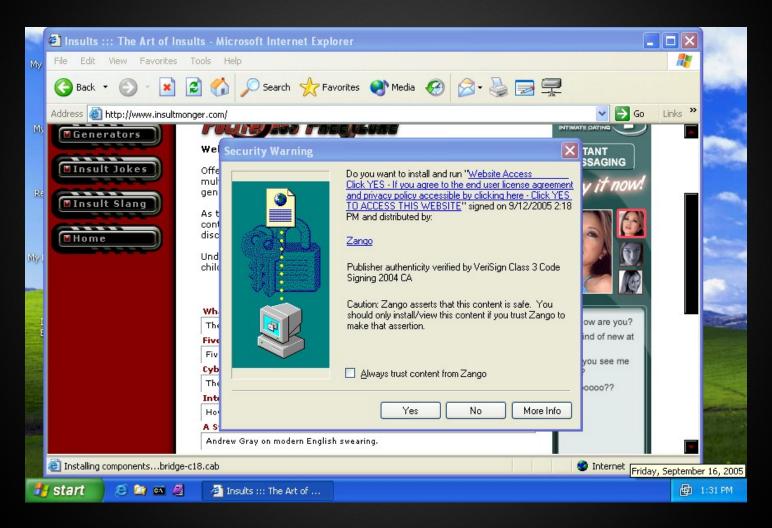
- Social Networks (YouTube, Twitter, Facebook etc)
- Ad Networks and affiliates, Search engine adverts
- Mobile (SMS scam, survey scam, fake / rogue apps)



ADWARE INSTALLS

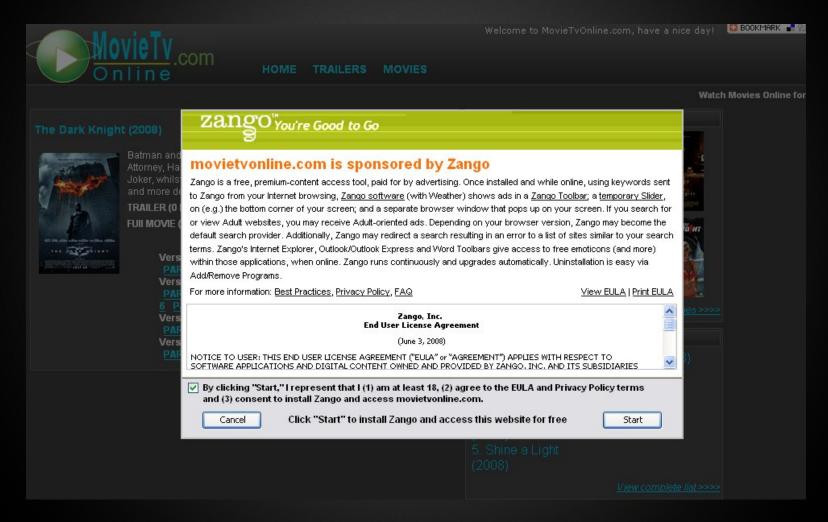


ActiveX (Gateway Evolution) - Sept 05



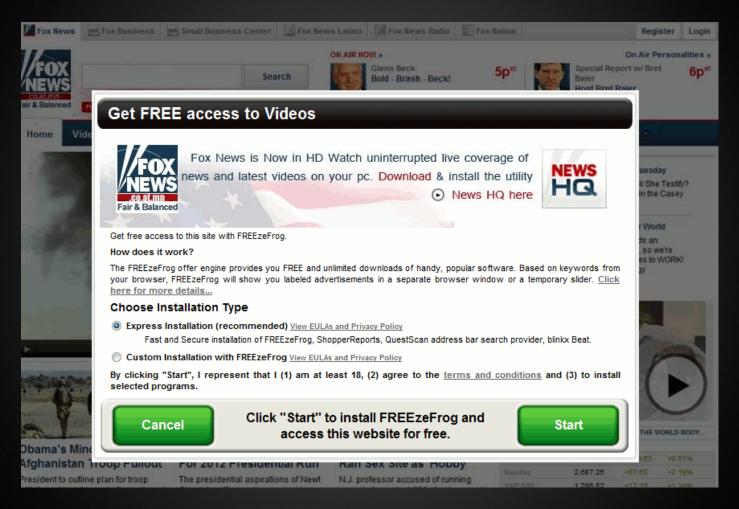


Content Gateways - August 2008



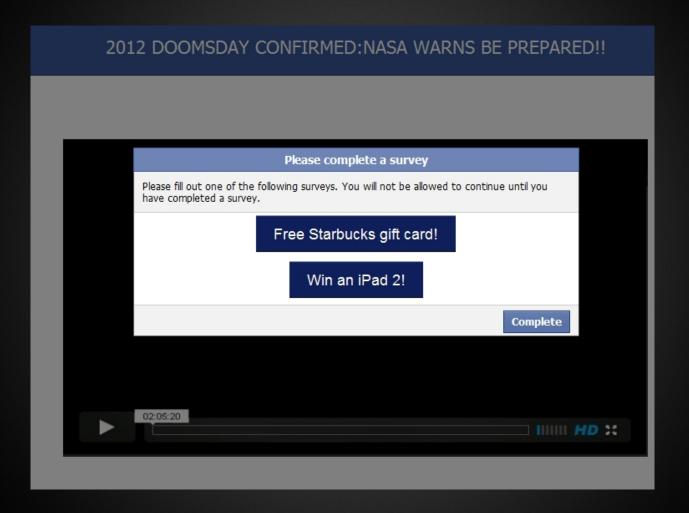


Content Gateways - July 2011





Surveys: (from '08 to) April 2012



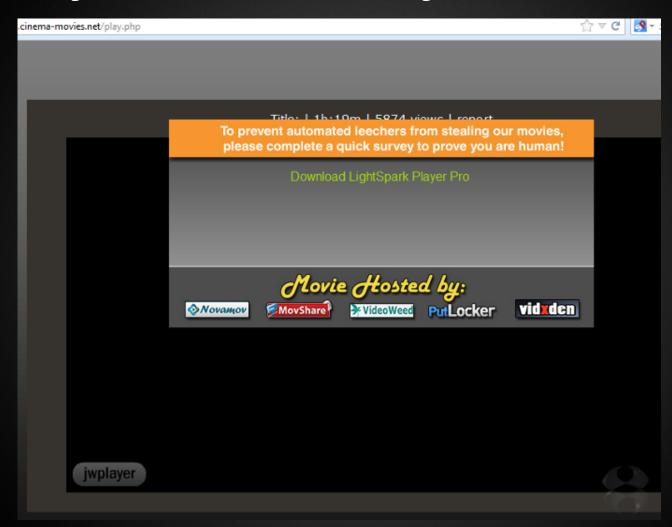


Ransomware Survey Lock - Dec 2012



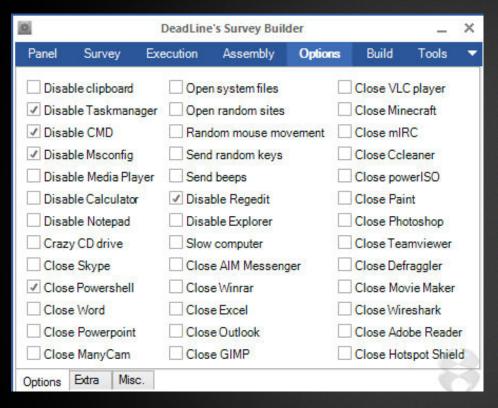


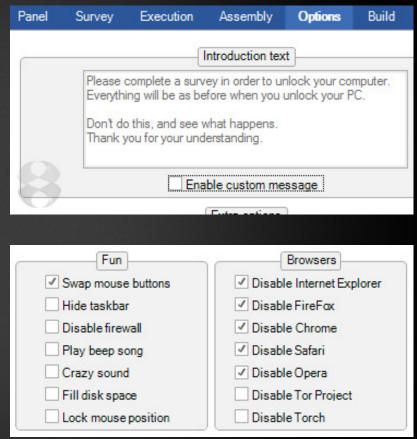
Survey Installers - May 2013





Survey DIY kit - July 2013





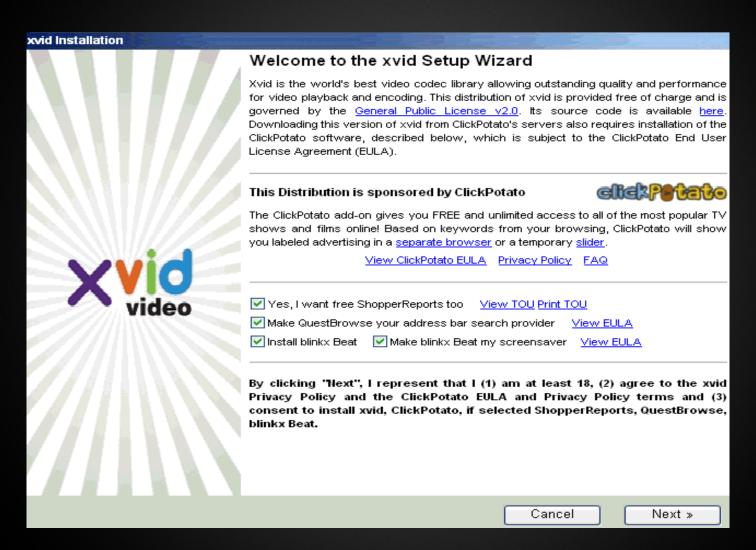


Bundles - 2005 to 2008

keyboard25.exe	32 KB	Application	6/12/2006 3:23 AM
🔄 defender23a.exe	36 KB	Application	6/12/2006 3:23 AM
🕽 drsmartload849a.exe	28 KB	Application	6/12/2006 3:23 AM
newname25.exe	56 KB	Application	6/12/2006 3:23 AM
Trelew.exe	303 KB	Application	6/12/2006 3:23 AM
MTE3NDI6ODoxNg.exe	25 KB	Application	6/12/2006 3:23 AM
SS1001.exe	30 KB	Application	6/12/2006 3:24 AM
stub_113_4_0_4_0.exe	15 KB	Application	6/12/2006 3:24 AM
⋘ warebundle.exe	565 KB	Application	6/12/2006 3:24 AM
WHCC2.exe	293 KB	Application	6/12/2006 3:24 AM
∰mc-110-12-0000228.exe	29 KB	Application	6/12/2006 3:24 AM
🕽 drsmartload45a.exe	28 KB	Application	6/12/2006 3:24 AM
🕽 drsmartload46a.exe	28 KB	Application	6/12/2006 3:24 AM
drsmartload1.exe	60 KB	Application	6/12/2006 3:27 AM
the drsmartload1.exe	60 KB	Application	6/12/2006 3:27 AM



Bundles – Jan 2011





Bundles - June 2011

Open Office Installation

Welcome to the Open Office Setup Wizard

OpenOffice.org 3 is the leading open-source office software suite for word processing, spreadsheets, presentations, graphics, databases and more. This distribution of Open Office is provided free of charge and is governed by the <u>General Public License v2.0</u>. Its source code is available here. Downloading this version of Open Office from FREEzeFrog's servers also requires installation of the FREEzeFrog software, described below, which is subject to the FREEzeFrog End User License Agreement (EULA).



This Distribution is sponsored by FREEzeFrog

FReezeFRog

The FREEzeFrog offer engine provides you FREE and unlimited downloads of handy, popular software. Based on keywords from your browser, FREEzeFrog will show you labeled advertisements in a separate browser window or a temporary slider.

View FREEzeFrog EULA Privacy Policy

- ▼ Yes, I want free ShopperReports too View TOU
- Make QuestScan your address bar search provider View EULA
- ☑ Install blinkx Beat ☑ Make blinkx Beat my screensaver ☑ew EULA

By clicking "Next", I represent that I (1) am at least 18, (2) agree to the Open Office Privacy Policy and the FREEzeFrog EULA and Privacy Policy terms and (3) consent to install Open Office, FREEzeFrog, if selected ShopperReports, QuestScan address bar search provider, blinkx Beat.

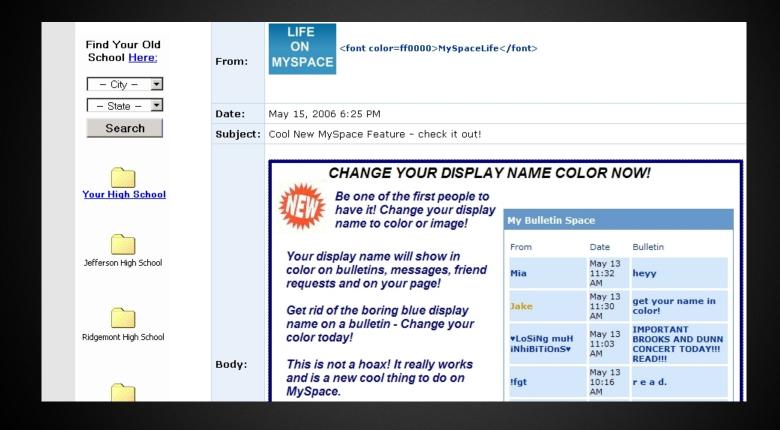
Cancel

Next »

INFECTION CHANNELS

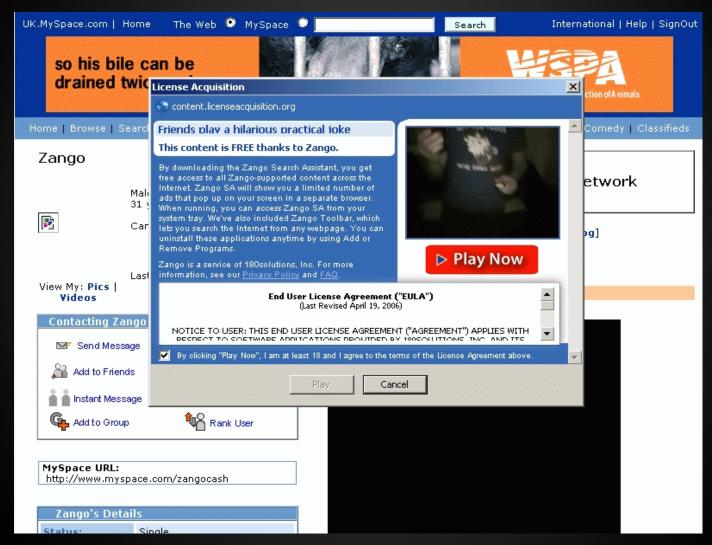


Social Networks - May 2006





Social Networks – July 2006



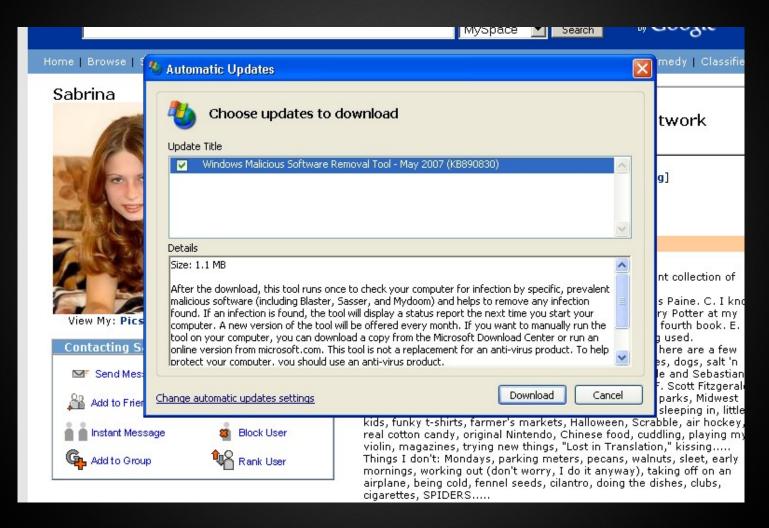


Social Networks: Fake Codecs Nov 06



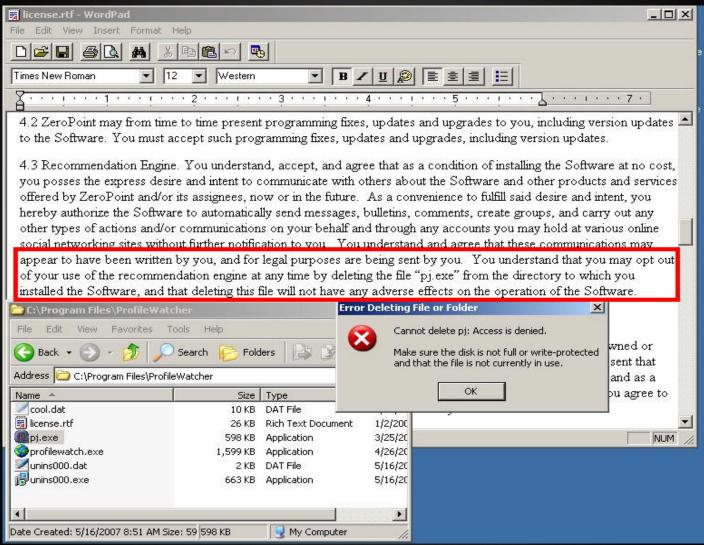


Fake AV on Social Networks – June 07



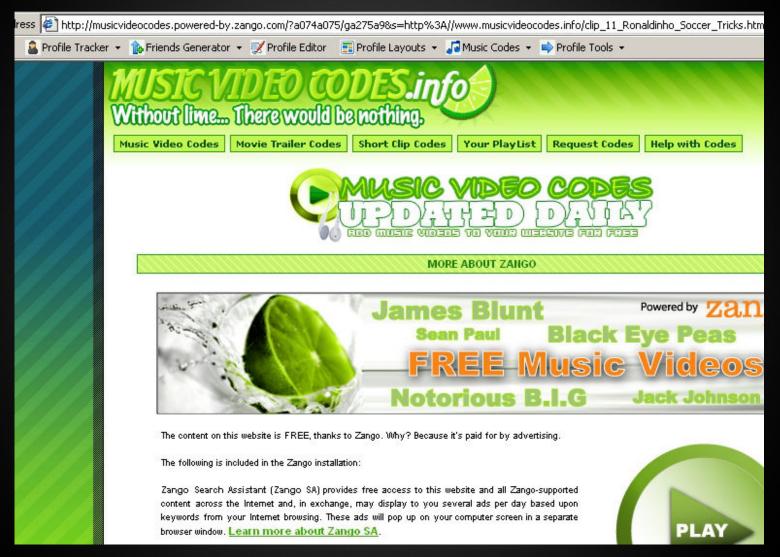


Profile Stalkers – Jan to May 2007



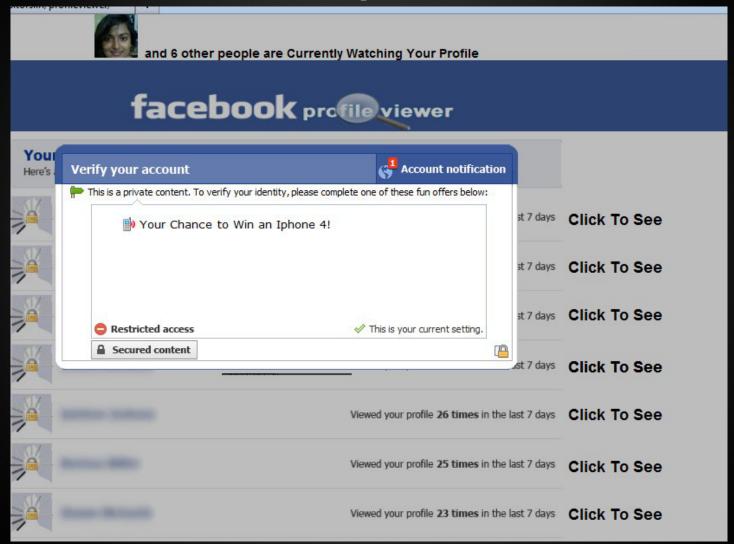


Profile Stalkers - Nov 2006





Profile Stalkers – April 2012





Profile Stalkers - October 2012

Your Tumbir Stalkers Have Been Found!...

Now just verify you are human and not a spam-bot.



To verify you are HUMAN and not a SPAM-BOT Please complete a free, 30 second survey below.



- WIN \$50,000 Dollars! Enter Today!
- Get Amazing Emoticons and Smileys!
- Learn How To Save Money On Gas!
- **K** Get Remote PC Acess Anywhere!
- Get A Subscription To Biz Mag!
 - Get Rewards Towards Shell Fuel!

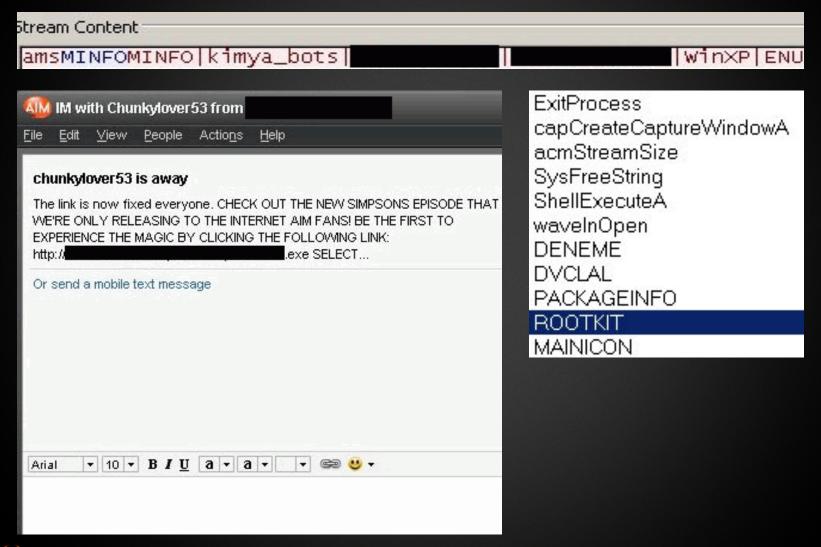


Botnet Installs - May 2006





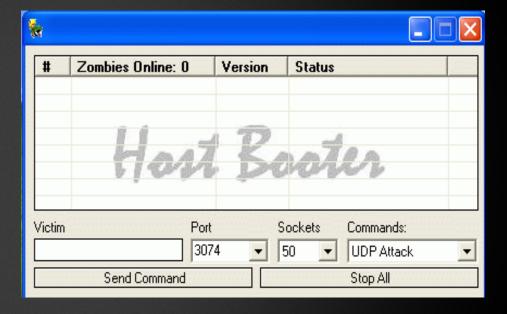
Botnet Installs – July 2008





Botnet Installs - February 2009

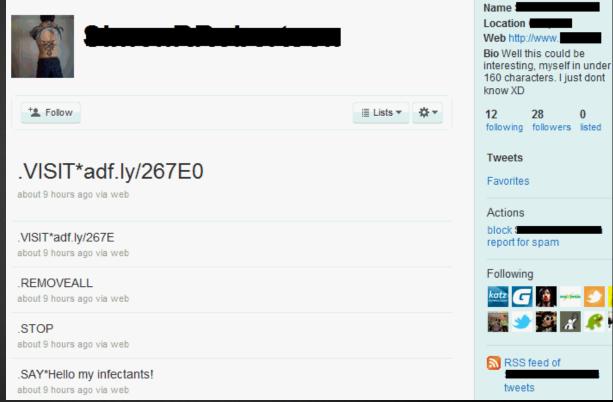






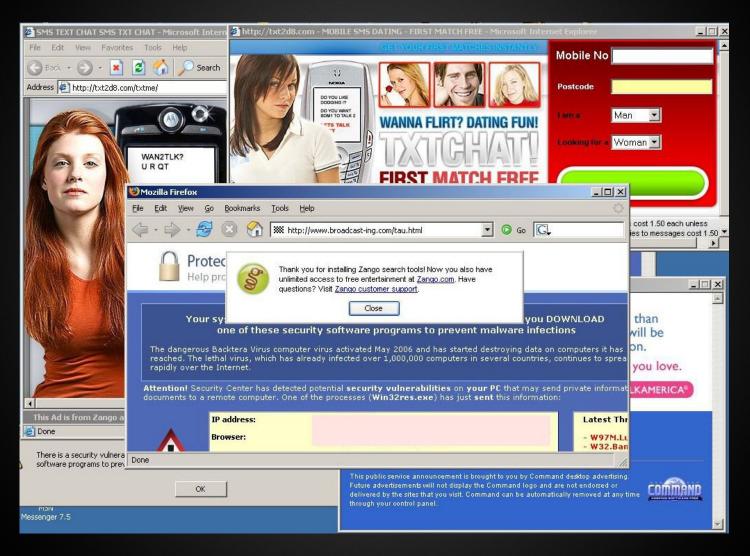
Botnet Installs – May 2010







Ad Networks and Affiliates





Ad Networks and Affiliates

Desktop is problematic for advertisers

- Proliferation of blockers: AdBlock Plus, NoScript, Ghostery, FlashBlock, Disconnect
- Web filtering / online blacklists / AV tools / threat detection
- Large selection of infosec blogs / researchers / privacy groups
- Easier to litigate as clear and understandable precedent



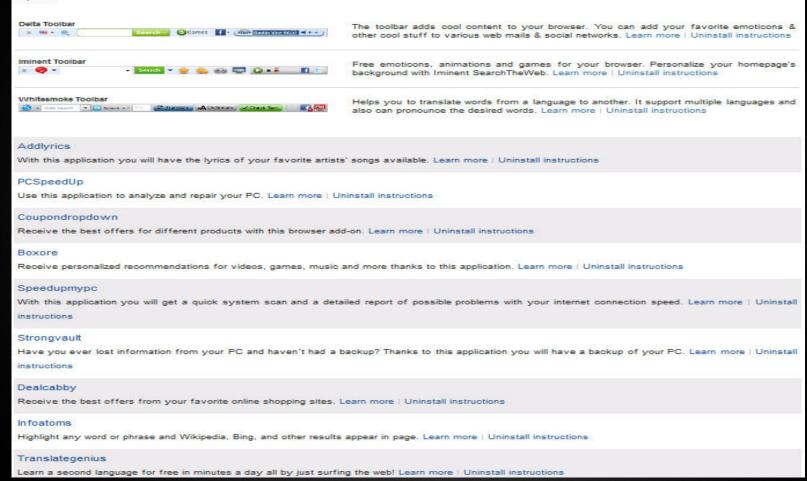
Ads in Search Results: Sept 2011





Ads in Search Results: July 2013

the chance to reject all the offers at the start and during the process. Compatibility: Windows 2000/XP/Vista/7/8 and Mozilla Firefox, Google Chrome and Internet Explorer.





Ads in the Mobile Ecosystem

Advantages of mobile / tablet

- Device owners not used to desktop ad tech in their phones.
- EULAs range from difficult to impossible to read
- "Freemium" in return for ads similar to desktop "value proposition"
- Security tech / research playing catch-up to traditional approaches
- Porn advertising is allowed on many major networks.



Key Ad Players in the Mobile Ecosystem

Airpush

- 2nd largest mobile ad network
- Places ads on the toolbar of the Android device

LeadBolt

- Displays ads over pages, can overwrite ads on pages
- Can collect lots of user data

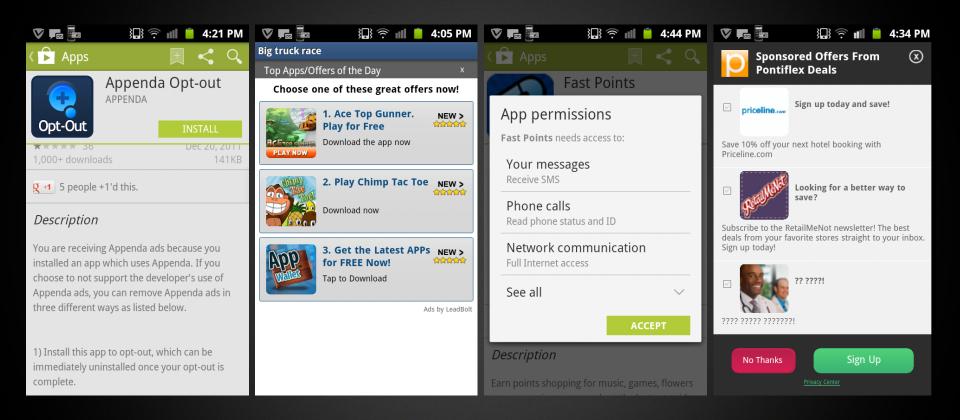


Other Notable Ad Players

- Appenda
- Pontiflex
- Plankton / Counterclank / Apperhand
- Sellaring



Mobile Ads: Samples



(I-r) Appenda Opt-Out, Big Truck, Fast Points, Pontiflex



Mobile Rogues - May 2013

Use the app on your phone to recognize the QR code and download the QIP_mobile.apk







Mobile Rogues – May 2013

INTERNET: For Sending and receiving data from the C&C.

SEND_SMS: Sends hidden Premium text messages. The number and the amount are controlled by the C&C.

RECEIVE_SMS: Can receive commands through SMS as well as the C&C.

INSTALL SHORTCUT and **CREATE SHORTCUT**:

Installs shortcuts to itself and websites.

CALL_PHONE: This permission would grant the app the ability to send phone calls without the users knowledge

BOOT_COMPLETED: Turns on upon Restart.

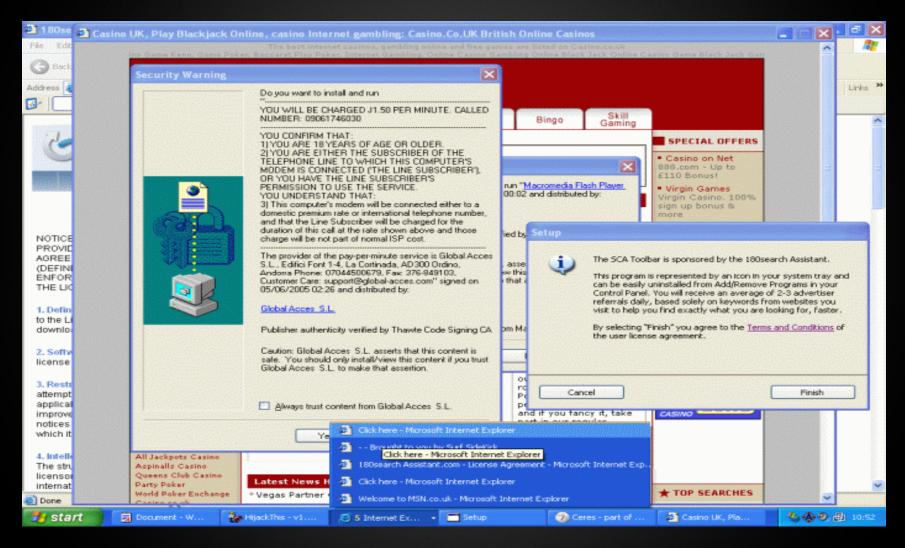
QUICKBOOT_POWERON: Turns on before other apps.





TRICKY TECH

Typical Install – July 05





"At Least we're not Ebola"

An actual Department of the Dark Arts

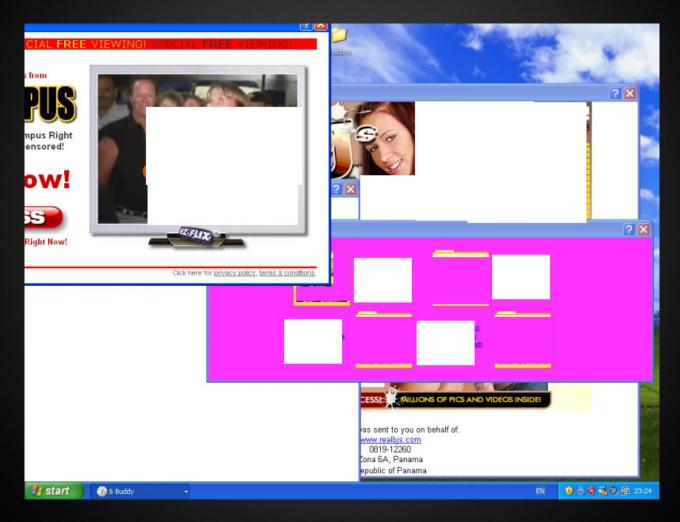
- A division of Direct Revenue
- "This has nothing to do with us" disclaimers
- Death threat comment watch (Document 5)

Living in Interesting Times

- "...perhaps a letter to his true home address showing that we know more about him will have results..."
- "..we are very interested in learning from your experience in dodging SP2 and Antivirus programs"
- "Very stealthy version...if we do a deal, we will not be caught"
- "It's not spyware, it's advertising software (teethy grin)"

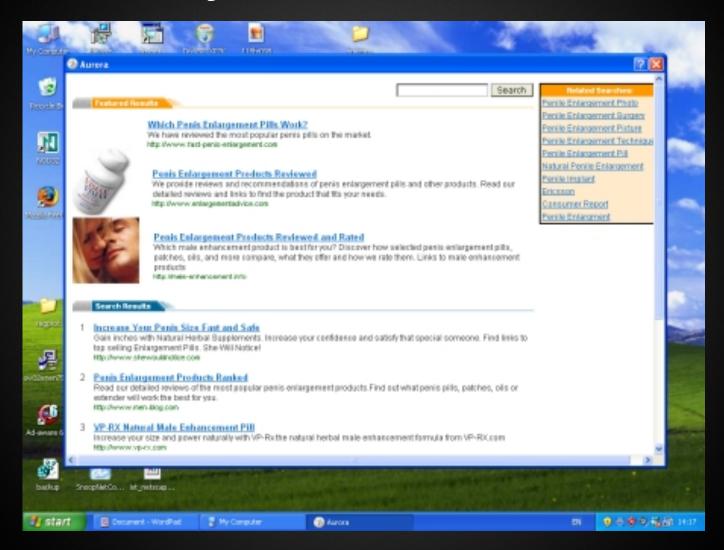


Aurora infected PC left for 5 minutes



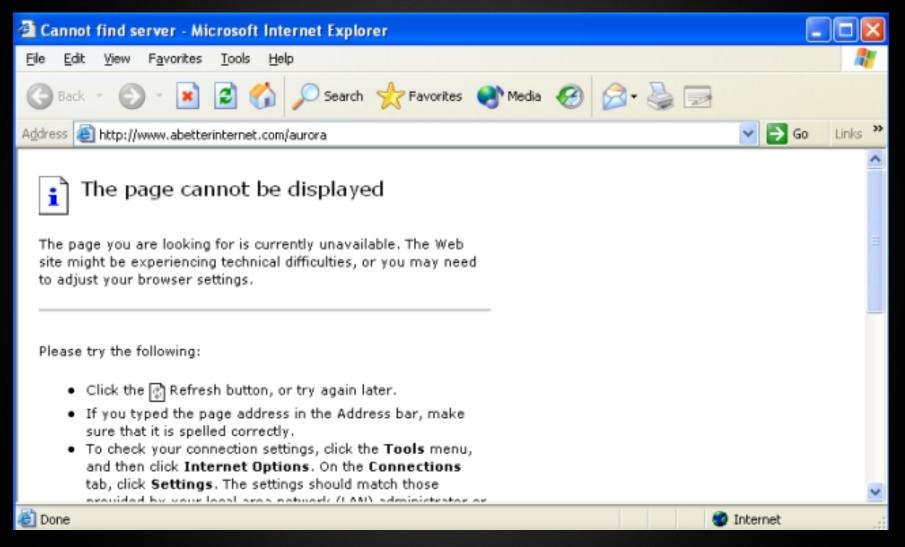


Aurora – May 05





Dark Arts and Death Threats





The Adware Collapse Fallout

Security Researchers

- Burn Out: Taking a Toll
- Narrowing of focus and lack of content
- Skillset adjustment: more anonymity = less accountability moneytrail

Adware Vendors

- Tech rolled up into other entities and industries
- Return to spender: reformation
- Platform creep



DID WE WIN?



Threat Track Security

Thank you for listening!

