Problem Case Study || Malware

Programs that compromise electronic data or disable the security of computers are not new however their prevalence has been exacerbated by the connectivity that the Internet provides. Malware are malicious software programs that pretend to be something useful like an image file or desktop screen saver. When a user executes the program, it overtly does what one expects while covertly carrying out the program's real objectives such as modifying or deleting files, changing the configuration of the computer or using the computer to attack other machines on your network.

A large Midwest regional hospital was inundated with malware. Computer viruses were frequently plaguing its systems, rendering them useless at times. Antivirus and antispyware software tools would successfully clean up defiled systems, but only after they created havoc for users and the IT staff.

The Solution

The hospital installed Pearl Echo in order to identify usage patterns and determine and block likely Web sites and users that were the root cause of their issues. The hospital's primary concern was that an employee could inadvertently download a trojan, making an infected computer a gateway to external hackers and providing unauthorized access to patient information. Pearl Software's custom blocking modules keep users from visiting sites that contain harmful content.

Success in the Field

Although the hospital originally purchased Pearl Echo to monitor usage patterns, they quickly learned the benefit of blocking users from getting to known malware sites. When Pearl Software scans a site to be added to its Echo.Filters URL database, it also downloads and checks for viruses in setup files, zip files and executable files. If viruses are found, the site is added to our Malware category to prevent a seemingly harmless site from launching a drive-by install of malicious code or drivers. In doing so, Pearl Software allowed the hospital to stop malware at its source, before it entered their network and needed to be cleaned up later with anti-spyware or anti-malware programs. According to one hospital administrator, "This is a better way to handle spyware."