

Computer Bits by Mark Eggert of Raad One Network Solutions, Inc.

Welcome to Computer Bits, a series of articles on computers and network information. This month I'd like to inform you about a new threat from the internet I ran into last week.

While at a client last week I was asked by a user to look into why his computer was running slow and that he couldn't access some parts of the network. When I looked at the Task Manager I found an application running called **virtualbouncer.exe**. I was able to stop the application but found that it restarted when the computer was rebooted. Further investigation showed that the application was installed just a few days ago and that we were able to uninstall it from the Add/Remove Programs Dialog Box. With the application uninstalled the computer functioned normally. I was curious and decided to investigate this application on the internet. What I found is interesting and a little scary! It turns out that this application is installed via a drive by method. This means by just going to a web site where this application resides it's possible to have it installed on your computer. Once installed the application calls home and starts downloading other spyware applications on your computer. The creators of the application have setup a web site that informs you about the application. It claims that this application is a spyware remover and that you have to pay for the full version to be able to remove spyware. What they're not telling you is that it only removes the spyware that it downloads to your computer. Some have termed this application as "Extortionware"! This application and the spyware it has downloaded can be removed with a bit of manual work by someone with experience in working with the Windows Registry. I really hope Microsoft can supply a patch to stop applications like this from installing without our knowledge. Hopefully none of you have been infected with this application or any others like it.

If you have a computer or network question you'd like answered and you think others would like to know the answer to, please forward them to me. My email address is [meggert@wi.rr.com](mailto:meggert@wi.rr.com), my phone number is 262-679-7704 and my fax number is 262-679-7664.