

# Porn sites not only sleaze on Net; watch for Trojan horses



MIKE WENDLAND

It happened the other night, a suburban Detroit man, Steve, was about to log off the family computer when he clicked on the "History" button on Microsoft's Internet Explorer web browser. The function keeps track of Web sites that have recently been visited when the user was last hooked up to the Internet.

And Steve, who doesn't want his real name used for what will soon be obvious reasons, was in for a shock.

Listed under the "History" function as web sites that his computer had visited were a half dozen XXX-rated pornographic sites. Web sites with names so disgust-

ing that this newspaper wouldn't want to print them.

Steve and his wife had been out that night, suspicion immediately fell on their 13-year-old son. Angry, hurt and surprised, Steve and his wife confronted the boy.

"He strongly insisted he had not visited these sites and since he's a great kid and we have not had this problem before, we decided to clear out the history log and retrace our steps to see how those pornographic sites could have ended up in the history log."

It took a while of Internet sleuthing.

But you can blame it on The Spice Girls rock band.

What Steve uncovered was a little-known scam that unscrupulous porn peddlers are using to drive traffic to their Web sites. They do so by tricking unsuspecting web surfers into logging on to a sort of Internet "Trojan Horse."

The "Trojan Horse" site is a

front, a shell for the real sites that the porn peddler wants you to visit. They will use any play they can to get traffic because each visit, or "hit" to their site means another viewer and the more viewers their sites bring in, the more they can charge advertisers.

Advertisers are typically charged by how many times their banner ads are displayed on computer screens, at rates ranging from \$10 to \$25 and more per thousand impressions, or displays.

So the porn peddlers, who by definition are pretty despicable, will do anything they can to score more impressions.

As Steve re-traced his computer's Internet access that day, he remembered a Web site he visited with his six-year-old daughter. She had heard about the Spice Girls and wondered what they were about. So Steve logged on and found several sites about the British group; enough to convince

him that his little girl was too young for them.

One of the sites that he visited was a very lame page that had a picture of the Spice Girls and little else.

But what it did behind the scenes is what surprised Steve.

For when he logged on, very quickly and automatically, the pretend Spice Girls page handed Steve's browser off to the smut sites. He logged in and out so fast that the screen didn't even show anything suspicious or improper.

But the hit happened. The porn sites were able to tally Steve's very brief visits as genuine accesses, thus counting as advertising impressions.

Pretty sleazy, huh? Steve never would have found out about it if he hadn't decided to check the "history" log on his web browser, only to find the offending links.

"It is very disturbing that these pornographers can put links to

their sites without our knowledge or asking," Steve wrote me by e-mail. "I'm sure it was disturbing to my son as well because he came within an inch of being blamed for something he did not do."

I mentioned Steve's discovery on my WXYT Radio show last weekend and have since heard from several others who report similar problems with other sites.

"These pornographers trick you into visiting a site about something popular and innocuous," e-mailed Bob of Redford Township. "But this could get really serious if you would do this at work and your employer has a policy of dealing harshly with workers who misuse the Internet. A lot of business offices now monitor the Internet habits of their employees by checking the browser history logs. Does anyone think your boss would believe you if this happened to you?"

What can you do about this? Unfortunately, not much. My

best advice is to check the "History" log every time you're on the Net. Learn how to set the preferences on your web browser to limit the size of the history file. And be sure to regularly empty the temporary Internet cache file where data from recently visited sites is stored.

If this really freaks you, try and determine what Internet Service Providers host the offending Web sites and then complain to them.

Coming events: Next Saturday, September 12, meet me in person as I broadcast the PC Talk radio show on WXYT from 4 p.m. - 5 p.m. from the big Home Improvement Expo at the Southfield Pavilion.

Mike Wendland covers the Internet for NBC-TV Newschannel stations across the country. His "PC Talk" radio show airs Saturday and Sunday afternoons on WXYT-Radio AM1270. His latest book, "The Complete No Geek Speak Guide to the Internet" is in stores or through the web at <http://www.pemike.com>

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cancellation, the insurance coverage disappears. Of course, if you don't need such coverage, then it's fine. But still there are many issues that should be examined before making the final move. Here are some points to consider before canceling a policy:

The following policies qualify for cancellation:

A. A 1970-era, non-dividend-paying whole life policy where the cash value grows at only 3 percent.

B. A universal-life policy sold in the 1980s that allows irregular or lump sum premium payments.

C. Mortgage-life and credit-life policies sold by lenders.

D. Term insurance purchases to cover debts that have been paid off.

E. Insurance on children who might not need insurance.

F. Funeral and burial insurance.

Before canceling a cash value life insurance policy consider the following advantages of such a policy:

A. Upon death, all gains gener-

ated inside the policy is distributed income-tax-free. For instance, if premium payments amounted to \$100,000 and then death benefit was \$1 million, the "gain" of \$900,000 will be distributed on an income-tax-free basis.

B. Cash values may not count as assets on college paid applications.

C. If you declare bankruptcy, creditors may be able to lay claim to them.

If you are in poor health, it might be wise to keep the policy. Reducing the coverage by taking the "reduced-paid-up" option can be attractive, since you would then be able to stop paying premiums in exchange for a reduced face value.

Another common reason to give up the idea of cancellation is to fund a donation to a charity or school endowment fund. This is done by naming the charity as the beneficiary of your life insurance.

Here, as in the case of policy replacement, it is highly desirable that you seek the assistance of a professional.

## Growth from page B4

Community College program aimed at welfare recipients where most graduates were hired by EDS and Kelly Services - and are African-Americans.

The day-long conference, in the Northfield Hilton in Troy, was called "Untapped Resources: National Solutions to a Tight Labor Market." Speakers traded on matching workers to available jobs, and training them for promotions and raises. Sponsors were Oakland University's political science department and Public Policy Associates of Lansing.

### Employers looking

There was wide agreement that employers don't know how to tap public resources.

Panel moderator was Paul Hillegonds, the last (1993-9) Republican speaker of the state House and now president of Detroit Renaissance. Hillegonds said the Legislature developed MEAP statewide testing and endorsed diploma laws in response to top corporate executives.

But business wound up sending the Legislature a mixed message. When parents criticized the MEAP tests, Hillegonds said, "the human resources people said 'we don't care what you do because we do our own testing.'"

Glazer agreed. "Colleagues let parents know what students have to do (to gain admission). Employers haven't. It's like pulling teeth to get employers" to define the work skills they need.

Several employers in the audience complained they didn't know how to tap the available labor pool and weren't afraid to hire blacks, former welfare recipients or even ex-convicts.

Oakland's Almadend said the Michigan Jobs Commission has

worked mightily to get out its message. Its Internet website is <http://lmichworks.org> and allows work seekers to post their availability and employers to examine candidates 24 hours a day.

### Issue: promotion

Luncheon keynote was Phil Power, chairman of HomeTown Communications Network, the company that owns this newspaper, and former chair of the Michigan Job Training Coordinating Commission.

"The big issue," said Power, "is not entry level jobs at a low level of worker skills and employer expectations. The big issue is how these people will move from the first job to the second or third one, with greater skills, better productivity, higher income."

He advocated spending one percent of payroll on training and promoting a company's existing workforce - "and it's the best investment we make."

Power also agreed that bringing more welfare recipients into the workforce will become harder in the future because public transportation is wedged to fixed routes.

"As the tight labor market continues to force folks on welfare into employment, a larger and larger percentage of those that are left are big-time substance abusers - booze and drugs," he said. "It may be that substance abuse counseling and treatment need to be blended with traditional employment and training activities of public agencies."

Power said employers in general aren't interested in reducing welfare rolls, public transit or providing family support services. Those tasks are best left to public agencies.

## Future 50 from page B4

entrepreneur to industry leader. In order for entrepreneurs to grow, their hallmark individualism needs to expand into flexible networking which connects the company to needed resources.

Also participating will be Murray Feldman, business reporter and 6:30 p.m. anchor for WJLB Fox 2 and host of the Feldman

Report on WJLB Newsradio 950.

Feldman will share his insights on the current business climate in the Metropolitan Detroit area.

The luncheon is open to the entire business community. The cost is \$35 per person. For further information, please contact Rose Marshall at BDO Seidman, LLP at (248) 362-2100.

ANDREW LLOYD WEBBER'S

# The PHANTOM of the OPERA

Directed by HAROLD PRINCE

The Toronto production of "The Phantom of the Opera" enters its tenth historic year this September, and we're celebrating with a

## "Who's Behind The Mask?" Sweepstakes

### How to Play

To play "Who's Behind The Mask?" Simply guess who the local celebrity 'Phantom's' are and submit your answers on the ballot below for a chance to win a weekend for two in Toronto & tickets to see "The Phantom of the Opera" at the AT&T Centre for the Performing Arts, Pantages Theatre in Toronto.

Tune in daily to WNIC on on-air clues with Jim Harper and "The Breakfast Club" mornings 5:00 a.m. - 10:00 on 100.3 WNIC, FM.

### Grand Prize

The Grand Prize will include a pair of choice tickets to a performance of "The Phantom of the Opera" in Toronto, one night accommodation at The Delta Chelsea Inn, round trip VIA RAIL passes and one 'Phantom' Gift Pack.

### How to Enter

If you know "Who's Behind The Mask?" complete the entry ballot below and send to: **Observer & Eccentric Newspapers**, C/O: Marketing Department 36251 Schoolcraft Rd. Livonia, MI 48150. One ballot per household. Contest is open to residents of Michigan over the age of 18.

### Contest Rules

No purchase necessary. To obtain an entry ballot and/or full contest rules, please visit the AT&T Centre for the Performing Arts, Pantages Theatre Box Office located at 214 Victoria Street in Toronto or mail a self-addressed stamped envelope to Observer Eccentric c/o Marketing Dept., 36251 Schoolcraft Rd., Livonia, MI 48150. Entry Ballots must be received by Observer Eccentric no later than Sunday, September 27, 1998. No substitution for or transfer of prize will be allowed. The contest is subject to all Federal, Provincial, state and municipal laws. The correct ballots will be submitted for a random drawing. The contest is open to residents of Michigan over the age of 18. Employees of Livent, Inc., Spring Newspapers, Delta Chelsea Inn and members of their households are not eligible.

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### 'WHO'S BEHIND THE MASK?' ENTRY BALLOT

ANDREW LLOYD WEBBER'S

## The PHANTOM of the OPERA

Directed by HAROLD PRINCE

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

Daytime Telephone Number: \_\_\_\_\_

### 'Who's Behind The Mask?' Answers:

• \_\_\_\_\_

• \_\_\_\_\_

• \_\_\_\_\_

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