

Internet Virus Frames Users For Child Porn

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Of all the sinister things that Internet viruses do, this might be the worst: They can make you an unsuspecting collector of child pornography.

Heinous pictures and videos can be deposited on computers by viruses – the malicious programs better known for swiping your credit card numbers. In this twist, it's your reputation that's stolen.

Pedophiles can exploit virus-infected PCs to remotely store and view their stash without fear they'll get caught. Pranksters or someone trying to frame you can tap viruses to make it appear that you surf illegal Web sites.

Whatever the motivation, you get child porn on your computer – and might not realize it until police knock at your door.

An Associated Press investigation found cases in which innocent people have been branded as pedophiles after their co-workers or loved ones stumbled upon child porn placed on a PC through a virus. It can cost victims hundreds of thousands of dollars to prove their innocence.

Their situations are complicated by the fact that actual pedophiles often blame viruses – a defense rightfully viewed with skepticism by law enforcement.

"It's an example of the old 'dog ate my homework' excuse," says Phil Malone, director of the Cyberlaw Clinic at Harvard's Berkman Center for Internet & Society. "The problem is, sometimes the dog does eat your homework."

The AP's investigation included interviewing people who had been found with child porn on their computers. The AP reviewed court records and spoke to prosecutors, police and computer examiners.

http://www.huffingtonpost.com/2009/11/09/internet-virus-frames-use_n_350426.html