

NHS DATABASE OF PATIENTS MEDICAL RECORDS WILL NEVER BE SECURE

Submitted by: Hothouse Communications

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PRESS COMMENT/RESPONSE TO NEWS

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- unless the government puts IT security at the top of the agenda

- Spyware experts urge government to respond to public outcry by putting IT security at forefront of database development with commitment to consistent consultancy and regular updates of software

CHERTSEY, UK, 18th December 2006: Webroot, the leading provider of anti-spyware software and other security technologies (<http://www.webroot.com>) for the enterprise and consumer markets, has pro-actively responded to continued discussions over the government's change of policy on patient records and the NHS' new medical database.

Plans by the government to commission the development of a database system, known as The Spine, to hold medical records of 50 million patients throughout England, has been met with public concern. More than 1,300 patients submitted brusque letters to the Department of Health demanding that their own details be omitted from the database. The concern is that details of mental illness, abortions, pregnancy, HIV status, drug-taking or alcoholism could become vulnerable to hackers and spyware-writers.

Lord Warner, the health minister, will announce a plan that would allow individuals to renew and correct their records and withhold them from the database, should they choose to do so. However, some doctors are concerned that patients are putting themselves at risk by choosing not to disclose their medical history. The information will be accessible to a large proportion of the NHS's 1.3 million staff – information that could possibly save a life.

Daniel Mothersdale, Marketing Director of EMEA for Webroot has his own concerns. 'The question seems to be 'how' the public will be given the choice to remain unlisted and not 'how' to relieve the public of these major security fears. Personally, I would like to hear one or two more important messages from this project's dedicated taskforce, to encourage patients to provide their details, knowing that they do so within a safe and secure environment. All too often, we have seen cases of databases that have been subject to spyware, concluding in the theft of thousands of identities or credit card details, for example.

Daniel continues, 'At Webroot, we urge the government to respond to the public outcry by putting IT security at the forefront of their database design and management. Hackers are hugely financially motivated and will use advanced methods of technology to infiltrate databases. If the British public knew that there was dedication and commitment to consistent consultation on the management and accessibility of the data, plus an understanding of spyware and other malicious code, before, during and after the implementation of this database, then perhaps the acceptance of this project may ebb in their favour. I'm not suggesting that the government disclose their security plans, but give some comfort to the British public that they are investing time and money to do everything they should to manage access

and stay ahead of the hackers.'

ABOUT WEBROOT (<http://www.webroot.com>)

Webroot Software, Inc. is the creator and publisher of the award-winning Spy Sweeper™ line of anti-Spyware products for consumers, small businesses and enterprises worldwide. Based in Boulder, Colo., and with offices in Chertsey, UK, the company is privately held and backed by some of the industry's leading venture capital firms, including Technology Crossover Ventures, Accel Partners and Mayfield. Webroot's software consistently receives top ratings and recommendations by respected third-party media and product reviews, and has been adopted by millions globally. Spy Sweeper software and other Webroot products can be found online at www.webroot.com and on the shelves of leading retailers throughout the United States, Europe and Japan. Webroot products are also available as either branded solutions or on an OEM basis.

To find out more about Webroot, visit www.webroot.com or call 0870 3516 788.

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