Steganos survey reveals computer users are leaving themselves wide open to security threats through lack of awareness of privacy and security software and settings

Submitted by: Prompt Communications Ltd
Monday, 22 September 2008

More than 10% of PC and laptop users have no anti-virus software installed at all, while many others are unaware of their web browser privacy settings or of the status of their firewall, encryption, anti-virus or anti-spam software

22 September 2008 – Cambridge, Massachusetts and London, UK - A survey conducted by Steganos, a provider of privacy software to more than two million consumers and SMEs worldwide, has found that many users are woefully unaware of the privacy and security software and settings on their computers.

The survey was conducted in July 2008 among laptop and PC users in the US and UK. The aim was to find out the levels of awareness regarding privacy and security settings, including the installation of anti-virus, firewall, anti-spam and encryption software; and users' knowledge of the privacy settings in their web browser.

The results show that an alarmingly high proportion of users did not know what software was running on their computers to ensure they had adequate protection from hackers, malware, viruses, 'dirty' websites, and other online threats.

More than one-tenth of respondents (13%) said they did not have any anti-virus software installed on their machines at all, while a further 9% did not know if anti-virus was installed. Almost one-fifth of respondents (19%) did not know if they had firewalls installed.

Three-fifths of the respondents (60%) did not have privacy software installed, and a further quarter (25%) did not know whether they did or not.

When asked if they knew what the privacy settings were on their browser, over half (52%) admitted they didn't know.

Less than half (46%) of all respondents, when asked: "do you think the privacy of information stored on your computer is adequate", said they thought they had adequate protection for their online data and security.

Michael Marzy, managing director for Steganos, said: "When you consider the alarming number of threats facing computer users today, and our reliance on the data we keep on our computers, the results of this survey are shocking. As a company we work tirelessly to promote good practices and means for users to keep their personal and business information safe as they access the internet, and to protect their privacy. To find that consumers don't even know what software they are using strongly suggests that as an industry we need to keep educating users."

The survey showed that some consumers are aware of online dangers and as well as having anti-virus, anti-span, firewall, and privacy software installed, they also had encryption software installed.

Encryption software ensures that should anyone have access to a user's computer – whether through dishonest means such as theft, or innocuous means such as sharing a home PC or work laptop – any files or content the user wishes to keep private are encrypted and protected.   This can include photographs, important documents such as downloaded bank statements, and music.

To request a full copy of the results and accompanying graphs, please email steganos@prompt-communications.com.

About Steganos

Since 1996, Steganos has been providing highly secure and user friendly solutions that secure static data and online communications.   More than two million users worldwide already depend on Steganos software. Innovations such as the world's first commercial steganography software (which hides data in pictures and music), or the first encryption software to use the Advanced Encryption Standard (AES), have made Steganos one of the market leaders for consumer encryption software. Steganos products are regularly recognized with national and international press awards and the Steganos brand is synonymous with protecting sensitive data. For more information, visit www.steganos.com

For further information:

Ellie Turner / Melanie Hesketh
Prompt Communications
+44 208 996 1650
steganos@prompt-communications.com