

AnchorFree Heralds an Age of Consumer Privacy

By JOSHUA PHILIPP
Epoch Times Staff

Everything you do online is being watched and recorded. Every website you visit knows what you're doing, and every search engine has a log of what you're looking for. Advertisers use this information for ads targeted at what every user is interested in, but that same information can easily fall into the wrong hands.

There are ways to hide this information, but for the common user the process would be difficult—on par with figuring out a Rubik's Cube.

In 2005, David Gorodyansky, 29, saw the rising problem. Fresh out of college, he and a friend took a hard look at the Internet and stood aghast at the sheer volume of user data floating around the Web. "There are two billion people on the Internet and all of their information is being collected," said Gorodyansky in a phone interview.

"My main concern was that there is a ton of data online about users—about all of us. Especially as more people are using public Wi-Fi networks,

there is a huge amount of data that can be easily compromised," he said.

He and Eugene Malobrodsky decided to solve the problem. What they came up with was a free security system that allows users to browse the Web anonymously while protecting their data. They founded AnchorFree, with their security product, Hotspot Shield, leading the way.

The application places a shield icon on the user's desktop. When the user turns it on, it will make every website on the Internet as secure as a banking website by encrypting it. It will convert Web pages from the regular HTTP, seen at the beginning of a Web address, to HTTPS. The "S" at the end stands for "Secure."

"What that means is basically your Facebook page, your e-mail, your search, everything you do becomes just as secure as your banking site," Gorodyansky said.

At the same time, Hotspot Shield directs users through its own system, throws out their personal data, and gives them new identities. When they browse the Web, their real names and information will then be hidden,



FIGHTING FOR PRIVACY: AnchorFree CEO and Co-Founder David Gorodyansky helped create Hotspot Shield, a free tool that hides users' private information while they browse the Web. COURTESY OF ANCHORFREE

replaced instead by anonymous identities associated with AnchorFree. This works by discarding the user's IP address and assigning a new one.

Installing the software is easy. It can be activated by simply clicking its "Connect" option, and users can turn the service on and off at their leisure.

ONLINE PRIVACY

Internet privacy is becoming a huge issue in today's world, and there is heavy debate currently around the subject.

The U.S. Senate Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation held a hearing on online consumer privacy on March 16, which heralded deliberations on consumer privacy by the 112th Congress. The issue "is front and center on the Commerce Committee's agenda," states a Senate press release.

"I want to know if the privacy protections we have in place are enough, or whether Congress needs to step in and do more. As Chairman, I'm committed to doing everything I can to protect consumers' privacy," stated the committee's chairman, John Rockefeller, in a press release.

The issue of consumer privacy boils down to a few key areas. Every user on the Web is assigned

an Internet Protocol (IP) address, which works as a kind of online name-card, telling everyone who the users are and where they live. Using this data, advertisement companies can watch the online activity of users through their IP addresses—what links they click and what products they look at. Advertisers also install what are known as "Super Cookies" on computers, which can monitor this data and relay it back.

Criminals also have interest in this data. Public Wi-Fi networks are an open show for a user's private information. While browsing the Web at a coffee shop or while checking e-mail at an airport, each user is sharing a wireless Internet network with other computers. A skilled intruder can use that same, unencrypted system to grab data from unwitting users.

"Everyone sitting next to you could see everything you're doing if they wanted to. So a lot of people use us for that as well," Gorodyansky said.

The problem is that companies rely on it to generate their ads. It is what allows companies to create ads on websites that are tailored to what

each user is interested in. Without this data, many websites would have to rethink ways to fund themselves.

Privacy companies and advertisers tend to be at each other's throats over how the Internet should be run. Privacy systems often block out advertisers altogether, and advertisement companies try to gather as much user information as they possibly can.

Gorodyansky believes he has the solution. "We try to make those two things work together—making consumers private while at the same time making advertising relevant," he said.

Hotspot Shield lets advertisers track the anonymous IP address it gives to each user. The user's personal data is then kept secure, and the advertisers can still serve their ads. The system is also funded by placing a small ad along the top of each Web page.

"All the advertisers can still see that an anonymous user is going and looking for furniture, looking for cars, cell phones, whatever. So the targeting is not disrupted in any way, but the user's identity is protected," Gorodyansky said.



MALICIOUS SITES: Screenshots of malicious websites taken by online security company PC Tools. These sites and others are being tailored to look legitimate and can fool users into giving up their private information. COURTESY OF PC TOOLS

South by Southwest: The Latest Target of Cybercriminals

By JOSHUA PHILIPP
Epoch Times Staff

Online crime is evolving, and cybercriminals have recently shifted their sights to South by Southwest 2011—an international music, film, and interactive conference. While fans look up names of artists and news around the event, online criminals are building fake websites and trying their hardest to lure unwitting users with their tricks.

"Whenever there is a big event that generates a ton of Internet activity, something like South by Southwest, the cybercriminals are smart enough to know that is an opportunity for them to target people with very specific scams," said Eric Klein, Senior manager for on-line strategy for security company PC Tools, in a phone interview.

There are a handful of devious methods showing up, using various ploys to fool users into giving up their credit card number or downloading malware that will cause harm to their computers.

The real difference with the current attacks, however, is that the criminals are buying advertising and are tailoring their websites to appear among the first results on search engines. The sites are also disguised to look legitimate. This

means that users looking for information on their favorite artist can easily be duped by their scams.

"It's almost like the equivalent of the old mafia, where they're trying to cover up their criminal activities by making it look legitimate," Klein said. "These guys are actually spending money in Google search and Yahoo search, like any other marketer would, to get ranking for their scams."

PC Tools found similar incidents during the Superbowl and with big movie releases including the "Harry Potter" and "Twilight" films. "Any time there is going to be a flood of Web interest—people looking for content, people looking for dates—we always see a spike in more targeted threats. South by Southwest is the latest example," Klein said.

According to Klein, this ties into the new direction online crime is taking. While criminals in the past focused most of their efforts on disrupting websites and crashing computers to gain attention around their viruses, today's criminals are focusing on social engineering scams to fool as many people as possible into buying their services and accidentally passing the scam to their friends.

"I think the signs that these threats are giving us are getting

more alarming because the criminals are getting much more sophisticated and tricky with the way they're presenting these scams to customers," Klein said.

The current vulnerabilities that were found include fake music downloads that will secretly rope users into paid subscriptions, fake virus alerts that get users to download malware disguised as anti-virus software, viruses hidden in images that will automatically download if a user clicks on them, and fake contests using ploys like "Take this quiz to win an iPad," or "Enter to win a contest," according to research from PC Tools.

Users can avoid these scams by restricting their financial information to websites they know they can trust, being careful what they download, and not falling for fake contests. Klein also recommends using anti-virus software with behavioral detection that can pick up on shady activities taking place behind the scenes on the Web.

"What has really happened is the threat has evolved, and it's actually more important than ever that people stay safe while searching online and they're not just clicking on everything that comes up on their screen. Because there is still a real chance that they could put themselves at risk," he said.

App of the Week: Baby Scratch 1.4.1

By TAN TRUONG
Epoch Times Staff



As controversy rages over whether electronic music qualifies as real music, the reality is that more and more of the music that we listen to incorporates elements of electronic manipulation and synthesized sounds.

In the 1980s, a new technique in electronic music called scratching was invented. The zipping and chirping sounds made on a turntable with this technique splashed into mainstream pop music with Herbie Hancock's "Rock It."

Ever since then, scratching has been wildly popular in hip-hop and other popular genres.

As popular as scratching may be, the high-torque turntable that is required to perform scratching techniques is not something that most people can easily access, and most people nowadays don't even own a vinyl record to scratch with.

There is now vinyl emulation software, but most still require dedicated hardware which only professionals would be likely to buy. If you just wanted to try your hand at scratching without a significant investment, however, there is now an app for that.

Baby Scratch emulates the vinyl medium but it also emulates the turntable and the requisite fader. Baby Scratch provides very solid basics. The spinning animation is smooth, the controls are responsive, and the sound is very realistic.

As its namesake suggests, you can perform simple techniques such as the baby scratch and the emulation is capable of allowing you to perform many others. The

main limitation you will encounter is that you will not be able to perform any techniques that require fine finger movement because the interface is just too small.

This limitation also applies to the virtual volume fader that cannot be manipulated as quickly as a real fader. There is a transformer button that helps address this limitation by immediately silencing the music when pressed, but again, it is so small that it can only be used with one finger when it really needs to support multiple fingers.

An obvious point to be made is that this app cannot reproduce the sensation of the torque and friction between a spinning record and your fingers that is required to perform some techniques. In this way it will never replace a real turntable, but that was never the intention—it is called Baby Scratch after all.

Baby Scratch comes with some classic samples and loops to scratch with and provides a few more available for purchase. You cannot import your own music to loop or scratch with, but you can record a limited length of audio through your iPhone's microphone. This sampling feature can be quite fun.

Despite its limitations, Baby Scratch is still capable of providing a satisfying experience to a novice turntablist or anyone with an itch to scratch.

Baby Scratch is available for free. It also has a sibling app called Flare Scratch, available for \$4.99 that addresses some of the shortcomings of Baby Scratch.



TURNTABLE: A screenshot of Baby Scratch, an iPhone app that gives the user a miniature turntable to learn simple scratching techniques.

TAN TRUONG/THE EPOCH TIMES



DJ: A screen on Baby Scratch shows its controls. The iPhone app can transform a phone into a miniature turntable.

TAN TRUONG/THE EPOCH TIMES

Qi Brings Wireless Charging to a New Level

By YORK KIE
Epoch Times Staff

One of the biggest hassles of owning our beloved portable electronics is the multitude of chargers we have to lug around to keep them powered. We dream of the day when a standard charger will work for all of our electronic devices without having to plug in any wires.

That day is already here, to a degree, with innovations in wireless power technology using the principal of near-field magnetic induction. A few wireless charging products have already been launched and a few more are in the development pipeline.

Two very similar products that are currently available are the Powermat and the Energizer Inductive Charger. They come in two parts: a flat surface charger and a receiver that takes the form of a special sleeve, battery cover, or back panel that is fitted onto your mobile device. Charging is done simply by placing the mobile device on top of the charger.

The main disadvantage of the above products is that the fitting of the wireless charging receiver adds bulk to mobile devices, and it permanently blocks the charging port that usually doubles as the data communication port.

Fortunately, since the founding of the Wireless Power Consortium, a universal standard for inductive charging called Qi has been established to ensure interoperability between wireless charging devices from different manufacturers.

Sanyo is working on battery packs with a wireless charging receiver built in that will work with any Qi charger, such as the Energizer Inductive Charger. This is a great move as with these batteries, no



CHARGE: A wireless lamp charger by Powermat is displayed at the 3GSM World Congress on Feb. 17 in Barcelona. JOSEPH LAGO/AFP/GETTY IMAGES

changes will be needed on existing mobile devices to make them charge wirelessly.

With more manufacturers adopting Qi, it may not be long before we are able to enjoy the freedom and convenience of charging our gadgets at any public places that provide standard wireless chargers.

Unable to Work?
We can help with social security disability. No fee unless you win.
All cases and levels of the process.
Call 212-822-8531 www.socialsecuritybenefitsnow.com

Cracked Screen? Laptop Broken?
Get your laptop or screen repaired for as little as \$125!!!
Quote "Epoch Times" to get 15% off ALL products & services
Professional Computer Repair - 235 East 25th St. New York, NY 10010 www.nettechpc.com
CALL 212 725 6633 AND GET IT FIXED NOW