

Executive Stress

OFFICE SUPPORT

“Professional Assistance for the 21st Century Professional!”

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Welcome!

I HOPE by now you've managed to settle into the new working year!

This quarter had a dreadful start, as we all know, with the tsunami disaster. My 5 year old daughter - like most of us - was very affected, and boxed up a heap of clothes that no longer fitted her, together with unused toys, to send over to the children. We were fortunate to find a missionary couple who were willing to take the boxes personally to the orphanage they would be working in for the next few years. :)

It's been full steam ahead for the start of 2005, with a few new clients coming on board in this first three months.

Big news is that eSOS celebrated a milestone on February 28 - 5 years in business: the magic number for most small businesses! See the article on page

4, which appeared in our local newspaper!

I want to take this opportunity to thank our loyal clients - many of whom have been with us since the beginning. Thank you for your belief in the concept of virtual assistance, and for your unending support! See the article on page 4 for details of our **special birthday present** for major clients and our offer to all **new clients** signing up in April.

Happy and safe Easter to those who celebrate it - stay safe to those who take the holidays!

Virtually yours

Lyn P-B

Any fool can make things bigger, more complex, and more vilolent. It takes a touch of genius - and a lot of courage - to move in the opposite direction.
- Albert Einstein

Newsletter

ACCORDING TO a recent comprehensive study by Eric Howes, an instructor at the University of Illinois, “nearly every anti-adware application on the market catches less than half the bad stuff”. With approximately 80% of home PCs in the US alone infected with adware and spyware, this is a little concerning!

What is Adware?

Spyware and Adware is software made by publishers that allow them to snoop on your browsing activity, invade your privacy, and flood you with pop-up ads.

How do I know my PC is infected?

Your PC is probably infected with adware/spyware if you download music online, your PC is running extremely slow, you are pestered by pop-up ads, or your homepage keeps changing. Free scans are available online ... Google search to test one out.

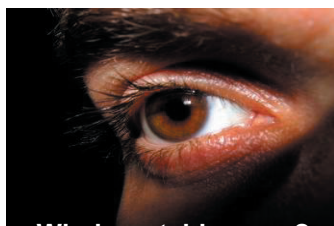
How do you get infected?

Adware ... Defend yourself!

There are three primary methods as tested by Howes:

- **Software downloads.** For one group of tests, Howes downloaded and installed Grokster, a popular peer-to-peer file-sharing program, from CNET Download.com. Installing Grokster and clicking OK in its subsequent dialog boxes loaded 15 separate adware programs, containing 134 “critical” executable components, by Howes’ count. This source of infection would compromise even Windows XP with its new Service Pack 2 (SP2).

- **Drive-by downloads.** To set up another group of tests, Howes used Internet Explorer to visit the following Web locations: 007ArcadeGames (a games site), LyricsDomain (a song lyrics site), and Innovators of Wrestling (a wrestling site). This resulted in 23 different adware programs being



Who's watching you?



What's Inside ...

Adware	Page 1
Easter Symbols	Page 3
We're 5!	Page 4
South West News article	Page 4

installed, carrying 138 components, Howes says. Drive-by downloads such as these are now less of a problem for users who've installed XP SP2.

• **You can't step into the same river twice.** For yet another test, Howes visited the wrestling site again, but on a different date. The makers of adware must have signed a lot of distribution contracts with the site in the interim. Howes says his PC picked up 25 adware programs and 153 components on that one visit alone. (Avoid trying any of the sites mentioned here.)

According to Brian Livingston of Windows Secrets Newsletter, "... the installation of adware should be illegal... Adware has exploded because it offers big economic incentives for its sponsors. They'll never adequately inform PC users about their software before it's installed. This troubling aspect of adware will never be wished away. Computer professionals ... have a duty and an obligation to prevent adware from infecting their PCs or anyone else's."

Here are some steps to take:

1. Use Giant AntiSpyware (or install the MS beta), Webroot Spy Sweeper, and CWShredder.

At the moment, this is the short list of programs that appear to remove the largest number of adware components. The registered versions of these applications aren't that expensive, and you can keep them constantly updated. The few dollars involved are well worth it, compared to the damage that can be done by a rogue program controlling your PC.

2. For prevention, install IE-SPYAD and Spyware Blaster.

IE-SPYAD is a list maintained by Eric Howes of approximately 8,900 Web sites that are known to do things like install adware, hijack your browser home page, etc. Merging the list into your Windows Registry puts these sites into IE's Restricted Sites zone. They can't do much of anything to you then. The list, as of this writing, requires manual updating, but Howes hopes to automate the process soon.

Spyware Blaster is freeware by Javacool Software that Howes recommends to guard against adware installs. A registration fee of \$9.95 USD enables the auto-update feature of the software, which Howes encourages. Javacool also makes a related program, *SpywareGuard*.

As commercial anti-adware programs develop their own always-on defences, they may conflict with

alternatives such as *Spyware Blaster*. Check the maker's documentation for possible incompatibilities before installing multiple products.



3. For big problems, consider stronger tools.

HikackThis, for example, is a deep-analysis utility that examines the Registry and sectors of hard disks where adware often lurks. It's not a tool for novices, but a serious scalpel for those who are faced with major surgery on their PC. It produces log files that can be analyzed by experts, many of whom help PC users by volunteering their time in online forums.

4. Keep your security baseline updated.

Every PC needs the following six components for protection against hacker attacks, both from the Internet and from within your company or home. (Products mentioned have been reviewed by Windows Secrets newsletter reviewers.)

• **Hardware firewall.** For wired home and small-office networking, the 8-port *Linksys BEFSR81 router* (\$80 USD) is rated "the best of our testing" by Extreme Tech. For wireless networking, the new *Belkin Wireless Pre-N router* (\$150) is currently highest-rated at CNET.

• **Software firewall.** Often called a "personal firewall," *ZoneAlarm Pro* is number one according to several testers, including TopTenReviews.com and PC World's Best of 2004.

• **Antivirus.** Trend Micro's *PC-cillin Internet Security 2005* antivirus suite, which includes a personal firewall, recently won head-to-head comparisons in PC World and CNET.

• **Antispam.** *Cloudmark Safetybar* (formerly SpamNet) is rated a Best Buy by PC World and Editors' Choice by PC Magazine.

• **Anti-adware.** *Giant AntiSpyware* or *Microsoft AntiSpyware* beta, *Webroot Spy Sweeper*, *CWShredder* (use all; free or optional registration).

• **Update management.** Without naming a winner (because update software is highly related to your network's size), a wide-ranging buyer's guide to patch-management software was published in the Oct. 2004 Windows IT Pro magazine.

Courtesy: WindowsSecrets.com Newsletter

Easter Symbols

How much do you know about Easter? Is it just another holiday on the calendar? Here is some interesting trivia about Easter symbology that you may not have known! (from www.wilstar.com & www.starcraftsob.com)

Traditions of Easter

Since its conception as a holy celebration in the second century, Easter has had its non-religious side. In fact, Easter was originally a pagan festival.

The ancient Saxons celebrated the return of spring with an uproarious festival commemorating their goddess of offspring and of springtime, Eastre. When the second-century Christian missionaries encountered the tribes of the north with their pagan celebrations, they attempted to convert them to Christianity. They did so, however, in a clandestine manner.

It would have been suicide for the very early Christian converts to celebrate their holy days with observances that did not coincide with celebrations that already existed. To save lives, the missionaries cleverly decided to spread their religious message slowly throughout the populations by allowing them to continue to celebrate pagan feasts, but to do so in a Christian manner.

As it happened, the pagan festival of Eastre occurred at the same time of year as the Christian observance of the Resurrection of Christ. It made sense, therefore, to alter the festival itself, to make it a Christian celebration as converts were slowly won over. The early name, Eastre, was eventually changed to its modern spelling, Easter.

Easter Bunny

The Easter Bunny is not a modern invention. The symbol originated with the pagan festival of Eostre or Ostara. The Anglo-Saxon goddess of spring, rebirth, the east and dawn, Eostre, was worshipped by the Anglo-Saxons through her earthly symbol, the rabbit, with coloured eggs presented to her as offerings.



The Germans brought the symbol of the Easter rabbit to America. It was widely ignored by other Christians until shortly after the Civil War. In fact, Easter itself was not widely celebrated in America until after that time.

The Easter Egg

As with the Easter Bunny and the holiday itself, the Easter Egg predates the Christian holiday of Easter. The exchange of eggs in the springtime is a custom that was centuries old when Easter was first



celebrated by Christians.

From the earliest times, the egg was a symbol of rebirth in most cultures. Eggs were often wrapped in gold leaf or, if you were a peasant, colored brightly by boiling them with the leaves or petals of certain flowers. These were then given as gifts of renewal and to bring good fortune.

Somewhere along the way, the offering of eggs became a custom for children, and today children hunt coloured eggs and place them in Easter baskets along with the modern version of Easter eggs - those made of candy or chocolate.

Hunting for and giving coloured (hard boiled) eggs is an Easter tradition practiced around the globe, including Greece, Poland, Finland, Scotland, Hungary and the Ukraine.

The Cross & the Hot Cross Bun

The Cross is the symbol of the Crucifixion, as opposed to the Resurrection. However, at the Council of Nicaea, in A.D. 325, Constantine decreed that the Cross was the official symbol of Christianity. The Cross is not only a symbol of Easter, but it is more widely used, especially by the Catholic Church, as a year-round symbol of their faith.

However, the cross used on Hot Cross Buns is in fact the equal-armed cross - a pagan symbol signifying the equilibrium of the natural order. Easter falls at Spring Equinox in the northern hemisphere - Autumn Equinox in the south - a time when the earth and sun reach a point of balance: equal day and equal night.

Hot cross buns are an ancient custom - probably an outgrowth of the ancient pagan sacramental cakes eaten by Anglo-Saxons in honour of the Goddess Eostre. It has been suggested that early clergy could not stop the use of the sacramental cakes, so they blessed them and decorated them with the cross.

Still another suggestion is that they represent the round, sun-like rolls of northern Europe, decorated with the equal-armed cross associated with Woden.



HAPPY HOLIDAYS!

We're 5!

ON FEBRUARY 28TH this year, eSOS reached a milestone for small business: 5 years in practice!

To celebrate, we're offering all new clients who sign up during April, 15% off their first invoice of \$100 or more*.

Major existing clients will shortly receive in the post a token of our appreciation for your continued loyalty and support. Without you, this milestone would not have been achieved and we want to send a small thank you by way of one or more Gold Class movie vouchers* to the movie of your choice. These vouchers are redeemable at:



Birch Carroll & Coyle MEGAPLEX Garden City
Birch Carroll & Coyle MEGAPLEX
Indooroopilly

VIC

Village Century City
Village Crown Casino
Village Geelong
Village Jam Factory
Village Southland
Village Sunshine

Heartfelt thanks again ... we look forward to continuing to provide services to you through

2005!

NSW

Greater Union Bondi Junction
Greater Union MEGAPLEX Macquarie

SA

Greater Union MEGAPLEX Marion

WA

Greater Union MEGAPLEX Innaloo

QLD

Birch Carroll & Coyle MEGAPLEX Chermside

Conditions of Use:

Valid at any Greater Union, Birch Carroll & Coyle and Village Gold Class cinema Australia-wide. Gold Class vouchers do not guarantee a reserved seat - seating is subject to availability. It is advised that seats are pre-booked to avoid disappointment to sold-out sessions. Gold Class vouchers are valid for twelve months from the date of purchase and the onus is on the holder to use the vouchers before the expiry date. Gold Class vouchers are non-refundable and cannot be exchanged for cash. Gold Class vouchers cannot be transferred or sold without the prior written consent of The Greater Union Organisation Pty Limited. Gold Class vouchers are not valid with any other special promotion or offer and cannot be used for Movie Marathons. Persons must be 18 years of age or older to enter Gold Class cinemas.

*Tickets will be distributed to Major clients as follows:

- 1 ticket - spend between \$500-\$1,000 FY04
- 2 tickets - spend over \$1,000 FY04

* Charge to occur in one calendar month

South West News article -
Wednesday, 16 March 2005

Helping beat executive stresses

SEVENTEEN Mile Rocks resident Lyn Prowse Bishop is like any executive assistant.

She writes reports, answers calls and prepares newsletters, but the difference is that she does this all from the comfort of her own home.

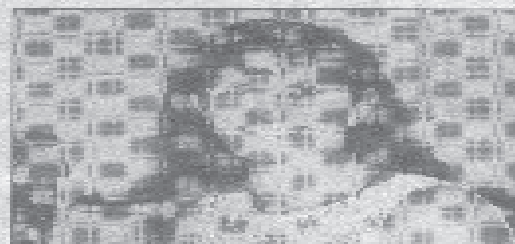
After more than 10 years as an executive assistant, and motivated by the birth of her daughter Ceilidh, Mrs Prowse-Bishop started a virtual assistant practice.

Her small business Executive Stress Office Support (eSOS) reached a five-year milestone last month.

eSOS specialises in providing confidential executive secretarial services to independent professionals, consultants and small to medium sized businesses.

Mrs Prowse-Bishop's skills include preparing documents, researching and desktop publishing.

She has about 30 clients from



■ Lyn Prowse Bishop

across Australia, the United Kingdom and the US. Mrs Prowse-Bishop said her success came from providing superior customer service, having a strong skill set, and keeping abreast of changing technology.

"Working from a home based office means some changes for my family, but my partner and daughter have both been very supportive over this period," she said.

For more information visit www.execstress.com or phone 3375 5813 or 0415 648 172.