



## **THE MALWARE REPORT**

### *Microsoft Re-enters the Antivirus Space*

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#### **The Malware Report Transcript**

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Matt Grant: Hi, this is Matt Grant, and you're listening to The Malware Report with Randy Abrams. Hi. Randy, thanks for being here.

Randy Abrams: Thanks Matt, it's great to be back.

Matt Grant: I wanted to spend some time today talking about an announcement that Microsoft recently made and that was the release of a free antivirus solution for computer users. Can you tell me a little more about this announcement?

Randy Abrams: Sure, actually the code name for it was Morro; it was announced several months ago. Right now it's not actually released; they released a Beta for it. What they're doing is phasing out OneCare. You might remember a couple of years ago Microsoft re-entered the antivirus industry and I say "re-entered" because MS-DOS 6.2 had Microsoft antivirus – which was a dismal failure. But they re-entered and

launched OneCare – which was not only antivirus, but also included other services like computer backup with online storage, system tune-up and a variety of other things. It wasn't free, but the pricing of it made it so it was almost free. People were getting \$30 for three computers to be protected by Microsoft OneCare and Microsoft made about two percent market share with that product from the stats I've seen. Microsoft has a goal of getting all those unprotected out there protected. With a consumer product, their goal is not to compete with companies like ESET, Symantec and McAfee; their goal is to get these computers out there protected because these infected computers are hurting the Microsoft brand. That's the purpose of the free product; it's not going to offer something like an ESET Smart Security solution where you get the firewall and all the other antispam things like that. It's just basic no bones antivirus and antispysware.

Matt Grant: It sounds like this might be a good thing. Now, users who don't have an AV solution can have a free solution that they can implement and use. Overall, is this a good thing for the industry?

Randy Abrams: It's an interesting thing because there already are free antivirus solutions out there like AVG and Avira. So, there are already good quality solutions for users who don't want to pay for their antivirus. However, what's different with most of the other free solutions, if you need technical support and there's a virus the product can't clean – that's when you end up paying and buying support. Whereas, a paid product like ESET, if you have a problem, support is free. Microsoft for years now has offered – at least in the U.S. and in some international locations – free support for antivirus even if it wasn't their program. If your computer was infected, you could call them. So, that might give Microsoft a leg up on the other free programs. I don't think this will make a big difference though because a lot of the unprotected computers, I believe, are using pirated copies of the

Microsoft operating system. Many of those users believe that if they use Microsoft Update, then Microsoft will know they stole the operating system and will come after them. Microsoft provides security updates for unlicensed users. I think there might be some resistance in a critical segment – these are high risk users who use pirated software – I don't think they're going to trust a Microsoft solution.

Matt Grant: What impact do you think will this have overall in the antivirus industry, if any? Or do you think this is a false sense security for some of the users? What type of protection will this free solution offer?

Randy Abrams: I think its going to offer a reasonable level of protection for a stand-alone antivirus product. It's certainly not going to match something like a personal firewall built-in and stuff like that. There's the old adage that you get what you pay for and I think it ultimately and virtually will have no effect in the industry. I think the biggest effect OneCare had on the industry was that it ended up changing the pricing models for some companies. When Microsoft announced that OneCare would include three PCs in the license – companies like Symantec and McAfee immediately adjusted their pricing structure. I don't think that with Microsoft abandoning OneCare and going to the free product, you'll see that price structure revert back to where it was before.

Matt Grant: Do you know what type of impact the Beta has had since its release? Have you had any feedback from folks who used it?

Randy Abrams: No, I haven't had any feedback. I checked the Beta forum yesterday, there wasn't a lot of chatter on it at that point, but the Beta was only out for a few hours.

Matt Grant: Interesting. Well, Randy, we certainly appreciate you taking the time to chat with us about this topic and this is certainly one we'll continue to revisit as well. If you would like a list of sites or have additional

questions, you can ask Randy at [askeset@eset.com](mailto:askeset@eset.com). This has been  
Matt Grant and you're listening to the Malware report.

[End of recorded material]