

## Malware Protection in 2012

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*A report on the latest malware threats and how to best protect your computers from malware that is constantly growing, developing and evolving.*

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### What is malware?

Malware is short for **malicious software** and is designed to disrupt computer operation, gather sensitive information, or gain unauthorised access to computer systems. Malware comes in a number of different forms - sometimes hostile, sometimes intrusive and sometimes just simply annoying.

Malware includes computer viruses, worms, Trojans, spyware, dishonest adware and rootkits. Malware is becoming more difficult to detect, and even harder to remove. Malware is not going away any time soon.

### Malware protection up until now

Historically, almost all malware on corporate systems could be identified and quarantined via anti-virus software from major vendors like AVG, Symantec, Trend Micro and McAfee. They each have their strengths and weaknesses, but over all we consider them about equal in their effectiveness. NetCare recommends and prefers AVG because it integrates fully with our NetCare Live system management tool, and currently over 70% of our clients are using it.

However, over the last few months of 2011 we began to notice a worrying trend amongst our client base. Quite bluntly, more and more malware was getting through the standard anti-virus defenses and we were getting an increasing number of complaints saying that computers had got infected. Sometimes this infection was simple to fix, sometimes it meant a time-consuming rebuild of the whole PC.

And it's important to say that this malware seemed to be getting through whichever anti-virus software was being run. Proportionately, there are just as many malware infections regardless of the brand of anti-virus software being used.

### One anti-malware solution is now not enough

When malware does get through the anti-virus software, the NetCare technical team always start the repair process by running the well-known and highly-regarded Malwarebytes tool. Malwarebytes utilizes a number of new technologies that are designed to quickly detect, destroy and prevent malware. Often, running Malwarebytes is all that is needed to identify and delete



malware from a computer, especially if the malware is caught early and before it has a chance to spread.

Now, the people from Malwarebytes do not state that their product is a replacement for anti-virus software. And nor does NetCare. There is definitely a continuing need for specialized anti-virus software like AVG – but we now recommend that all anti-virus software needs to be augmented with a second level of defense via the use of anti-spyware software like Malwarebytes.

We have been testing Malwarebytes on our own network computers during January 2012, as well as some pilot client sites, and I'm pleased to report that the results to date have been positive. Malwarebytes runs its checking process constantly in background mode as well as the anti-virus software, so it was important to test any performance impacts from running them both at the same time. NetCare have confirmed that there are no speed issues at all with Windows 7 computers nor with Windows XP computers running at least a dual core processor with 2Gbytes of RAM. However, there can be performance issues with Pentium 4 PCs running Windows XP – but it is our recommendation that all such PCs should be on a replacement schedule anyway.

## **Introducing our new NetCare Malware Protection service**

NetCare is pleased to announce the introduction of our new Malware Protection Service from February 1<sup>st</sup> 2012. This service combines the features and benefits of both AVG and Malwarebytes into one monthly fee of \$6 per computer per month (plus GST) - and for that fee we monitor them both, upgrade them both, report on them both, and most importantly, we automatically remove any viruses, worms, Trojans, spyware, adware and rootkits that either of them detect.

We can't guarantee that nothing will still sneak through – it's not our software, so we can't make that claim. But, if something gets past both AVG and Malwarebytes and we are able to fix it remotely, then we can guarantee that you will not receive a bill for our work. However, if it causes sufficient damage that we need to come onsite and repair the computer, then a service fee is still payable. This service fee can be halved if you send the computer to us.

## **How to convert over to NetCare Malware Protection**

All clients that are currently using NetCare Endpoint Security (our current AVG-only service) are invited to upgrade to NetCare Malware Protection at any time from February 1<sup>st</sup> 2012 onward. The increased cost is only \$1 per computer per month, and no installation fee is payable. Please note that an important part of the upgrade process is to firstly ensure that all computers will cope with the increased overhead of running both programs.

For those clients that are running an anti-virus solution other than AVG (for example, Symantec, Trend, or McAfee) and who wish to change over to NetCare Malware Protection, NetCare would be happy to discuss transition arrangements, for which a service fee will be payable.

And for those clients that wish to continue running an anti-virus solution other than AVG but still want an extra level of malware protection, then our new NetCare Antispyware Protection service (powered by Malwarebytes) is available for \$4 per computer per month (plus GST), along with a one-off installation fee of \$150 (plus GST).