

## Re: SemiOT: problem with XP Service pack 3

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Clark F Morris wrote:

A month or so ago I applied Service Pack 3 to Windows XP home from a download and started getting a message that Automatic Updates was turned off. I tried to change the Automatic Updates setting but it was locked (all of the choice buttons were greyed out). I think I got

<snip>

My sympathies Clark,

And all I can do is relate you to my experience. Just remembered – I'm using an XP machine.

If you've been reading me, I obviously had viruses big time, and the most irritating thing was I lost my password that lets me get into Net Express IDE. That was back around April this year.

Having lost access to the computer no keyboard response then no damn screen – bit tricky without a keyboard and a bit more difficult with no screen to see what is happening. You must have seen the heavy TV advertising campaign some years back, MDG Canada, "It will only cost you 99 cents per day etc....". I bought the package at their Calgary branch but cost went up by adding MS Office Suite because I needed a word processor and on Pete's good advice I switched from COBOL files to a DB – so I was using MS Access.

Initially, I found MDG had closed their Calgary branch after a successful selling period; I took the PC to the nearest local computer shop. Store has been through three change of owners but retained the same female 'tecchie'. She was full of bullshit and looked like Mrs. Punch. I recall you are an American so you might not know about the seaside show for kids, Punch and Judy, hand puppets and Punch with a club beats the shit out of Mrs. Punch, and anybody else who shows up. . Imagine somebody with a hooked nose, no teeth and the chin scrunched up under the mouth. (She has her teeth, actually, but that;s's what she looks like :-). She had my machine for a MONTH and got nowhere. Told me a plastic clip was broken on a motherboard (???) and replaced it with a new board from Foxcomm – whoever they are. Her BIBLE was AVG which both Pete and I referred to. She just banged away for the whole month trying to get AVG to do its thing. So I got my machine back for \$250 – the motherboard and a free version of AVG which she downloaded for me. Her parting line, Pete made reference to the topic, "The only thing to do is reformat and re-install your software". Yeah.....

Now the snag is I was at SP2 and the damn thing just wouldn't download. Many attempts, until eventually I had it downloading listing the updates per KB article. OMG ! It's working ! Not quite – having listed the updates, 92 of 'em, fresh dialog "Can't update" with not a clue by Error Code where to look in the vast MS

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on-line emporium. Without a clean SP2 download AVG just didn't function; they work hand-in-hand.

At this point I e-mailed MDG (back East) and to give them their due, they replied by return. From my info they suggested using the newly announced SP3. I googled on that and found messages that it was a horror-story for some people. I tried, not a disaster from what I got, but it simply didn't work. Frustrated by my the exercise I removed AVG because I was constantly getting pop-ups with error warnings. My MS Security Centre for Virus Checking showed a Red 'OFF' button. Don't even know how that got triggered. And of course on a daily basis warning pop-ups that my machine wasn't covered for viruses. Followed the link and downloaded, "Try a Free Download" for two virus checkers. Their checks are designed to frighten you to death. I got something like a total of 457; (naturally a different total count per piece of software), and oh yes, "We recommended you download the full software package If you care to pay us some greenbacks, then we'll clean your machine up for you". Not quite in the same vein ErrorSmart – listed errors and will clean up for you if you answer 'Yes'. Looked OK so that one I paid for. Not being into the game (security), subsequently realized it was merely a Registry entry checker/cleaner. Possibly valid to have that, but does nothing about viruses per se.

Already less than enthused about computers or programming and having hip surgery in May 2008 I spent this summer back in the garden. Only fairly recently started looking at the problem again. Bear in mind the MS Dialog Virus Checking = OFF and I don't have AVG loaded. I tried SP3 again. Definitely this piece of software from MS has been updated – the dialogs are different from back in the Spring. Long process so took the dogs for a walk, rather than sit watching a bloody screen. It worked – not a single hiccup.

The two I'm about to reference are freebies, appear extremely comprehensive but they too entice you to pay for a download of the full package. I think initially I downloaded AVG Version 8 now. On Pete's recommendation I downloaded Micro Trend Housecall – well that is not actually a download to your machine, it works from their site. Presumably you have a 'local' copy when you pay for the full software. I should mention that when I re-installed AVG the MS Security Centre – Virus Checking now = <ON>. I didn't do anything to trigger the the <ON>.

I did a full disk scan with the following, first I ran Micro Trend Housecall followed by AVG. I can't remember which was which but I did get warnings on three 'possibles' which could be Trojans. I didn't delete them initially, particularly one which had a name referring to 'windows\...\driver.sys. I had problems with the cheapie Lexmark printer, which came as part of the package. I can use the Lexmark icon and can instruct the printer to self-test either at the printer or from the computer; I can scan and store images, but I can't print anything. Back in April I un-installed and re-installed the Lexmark software and the printer worked. At this stage I haven't done that yet to see if the printer is kosher.

I'm not suggesting you switch your security software, I'm sure many of these packages are as good as one another – but I do think the 'sequencing' of what we are doing may have a material effect on how things happen. Not dramatically different from our own world of coding in COBOL – There's no way I'm going to display an M/F dialog if I haven't instantiated it :-).

At this point a cautious 'OK' on my machine although if I click say on the Mozilla Firefox Web Icon it seems to take an inordinate amount of time to load. Could be AVG is thrashing away in the background and certainly when I click the Mozilla Thunderbird e-mail icon, a little quicker, but up pops an AVG message "e-mail being scanned and is clean". Now if only I could get Net Express back up and running and see if my coded dialogs give the same performance I was used to, then I might be satisfied.

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MACHINE PERFORMANCE :

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General question to those used to kicking the hard stuff – the machine. Is it possible that a virus/malware could affect machine running time – i.e., performance ?

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RE–CAP ON YOUR MESSAGE :

I use defaults so I had no problems relating to those administrator problems you referred to, as I am the sole user.

Although the write–up on SP3 indicated it was the final and an accumulation of checks in SP1 and SP3 – I still receive the odd update from MS – no details so not necessarily related to Virus checking.

My Auto–Update is <ON> and so far it doesn't seem to have caused any problems.

ASSUMING the home user is on–line, yes it is amazing if updates work for the non–tecchie brigade. It's a challenge even for us into coding programs. I spoke to my daughter in Ancaster, Ont., only a few days ago. "Ever had any security problems with your laptop(s).?" She replied, "Yes we did once. We cleaned everything off the machine and started again".

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MICROSOFT :

We get perplexed by the details in keeping our machines clean and never ask the obvious question. Seeing that they promote Winders as the best and greatest, how come we have to keep buying add–ons to keep our machines sweet.

Having been advised that a particular virus/Trojan/malware has happened, – doesn't MS have a moral obligation – shouldn't they be constantly 'firewalling' their product to protect us without us having to pay additional money to third–party 'checkers'.

I read, within last week or so, somebody easily got into Sarah Palin's e–mail on Facebook (???). The government came down on him like a ton of bricks and if found guilty he could do some 9–12 years jail–time.

Jimmy, Calgary AB

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