



Seth Rosenblatt <seth.rosenblatt@cbsinteractive.com>

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## ComputerCOP

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Cobb Jerry <Cobbj@mcao.maricopa.gov>  
To: Seth Rosenblatt <seth.rosenblatt@cnet.com>

Thu, Oct 2, 2014 at 9:24 PM

Seth –

Thanks for the opportunity to respond to the EFF report. I wish they had shown us the same professional courtesy before mentioning our agency in their post. But we're not the only ones who were ignored. It appears EFF did not bother to speak to a single office that actually purchased ComputerCOP – let alone a single user – to find out how it has actually performed.

If they had, they would have learned that there have been no documented instances of this product being misused or compromising anyone's safety or privacy. Speaking for our own office, we have received nothing but positive responses from parents who've used it. But these are troublesome facts that only interfere with the EFF's predetermined agenda.

In short, this is a story filled with inaccurate information and numerous misrepresentations from an organization that just so happens to be offering a competing product. That fact alone warrants skepticism about its conclusions. Unfortunately however, several news outlets (and I am not including CNET here) have accepted and regurgitated the EFF report without making any effort to verify the information it contains or talk to someone who's actually used the product, let alone checked it out first hand.

To call ComputerCOP "spyware" is ridiculous. This product is fundamentally no different than the parental controls that are available on countless digital devices and software used by kids today. In fact, most parents believe they have the right and responsibility to know what their children are doing online, and this product is a simple tool that allows them to do that.

Unlike what most experts would term "spyware," ComputerCOP does not surreptitiously send information to third parties. The hysterical claim that ComputerCOP sends notification emails *without encryption* (italics theirs) is utterly fatuous and disingenuous. The software uses a user's existing e-mail service to send notifications. A ComputerCOP notification has no greater potential for being compromised than any other e-mail a user sends.

Also contrary to the article's claim, the keystroke logging function – which is an optional utility that most users don't install – does not capture every keystroke. The keystroke logging utility is extremely limited, capturing only those keywords entered by a parent or guardian and a small subset of words from the product's keyword library (e.g., profanity). Nor does the feature surreptitiously install. A user must activate it. Prior to the installation, a window is displayed advising that the feature is unlawful to be used on computers operated by adults without their consent. Once installed, a "siren" icon appears in the system tray. The feature can be easily removed at any time, or bypassed by having separate user profiles (i.e., one for a child and one for an adult).

There are numerous other false claims and misrepresentations in the EFF article. For example, the author notes that agencies have purchased ComputerCOP with assets seized from criminals (aka RICO funds), then later claims the product is being purchased with "our tax dollars." The author also criticizes the company for creating misleading marketing materials, and then turns around and relies on the information in those materials to make claims about how widely the product is used. His assertion that media outlets should consider "alerting parents to its dangers" is not supported by a single shred of evidence that the product has caused any harm.

About the only point we can agree with in the article is that "there are certainly risks for kids on the internet." ComputerCOP, however, is not one of them. As recent headlines attest, Americans are at far greater risk of having their personal information compromised by major retailers and financial institutions than anything this product is remotely capable of.

Please don't hesitate to contact me if there are additional points you would like us to address or elaborate on. Again, thanks for the opportunity to provide input.

**Jerry Cobb**

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From: Seth Rosenblatt [mailto:[seth.rosenblatt@cnet.com](mailto:seth.rosenblatt@cnet.com)]

Sent: Thursday, October 02, 2014 5:36 PM

To: Cobb Jerry

Subject: Re: ComputerCOP

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