

Tip for July 2006
Courtesy of Wyvern Technology
0418 421 202
www.wyverntech.com



Since I have been installing **Ewido** on people's computers, I have discovered that one of the first things it does is get rid of the **Hotbar** program. In fact, **Ewido** won't let you download it at all – another reason for getting **Ewido**. I have included some of an article that I picked up on the internet which may go some way to show you how dangerous **Hotbar** spyware is.

“Hotbar is a program that monitors the Internet activities of all users of the Windows PCs where it is installed. The company that markets Hotbar, Hotbar.com Inc. explains in detail what Hotbar does -- it's an appalling thing to read -- but I doubt that many computer users looked at that document before they installed the program.

Users apparently think Hotbar is making their Internet browsing or e-mail use more enjoyable because Hotbar lets them color mail and apply a skin (a photographic overlay) to program windows. But it's actually monitoring the surfing habits of all users and reporting this information back to a central site so it can be marketed to anyone who wants to buy it.

“When you enter information on a Web page (e.g., when you complete an online registration form or sign up for a contest), the operator of the Web site may insert that information into its URL for that or the next page. This information often appears after a question mark (“?”) in the URL, although it can appear in other places.

“This means that your name, your address, your e-mail address, or similar information you might consider private or personally identifiable which you enter into a Web page sometimes becomes part of a URL that is then transmitted to Hotbar and automatically stored in Hotbar's databases. This can also occur with words, topics, products, or phrases you enter into search engines -- whether those engines are provided by the Service itself or found elsewhere on the Web -- while using the Service. Hotbar has no control over what information third party Web sites put into their URLs or where they put it, but any information in each URL is collected and stored by Hotbar when you are using the Service.”

By Al Fasoldt

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There is more but you can Google the article and see for yourself. Again, don't be alarmed, just be alert to the dangers out there and the more fun it looks, the more likely it is to contain nasties. So although it is boring, read the EULA before you accept anything

Till next time,

Deirdree