



ASP WISHES EVERYONE A HAPPY FESTIVE SEASON

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NAUGHTY OR NICE? DATA COLLECTION & SECURITY

Santa Claus could be breaking privacy laws in his collection and use of data about children, experts have warned. Yuletide cheer-bringer Claus could be putting the personal data of millions of children at risk. Data protection laws lay down strict conditions for the use of personal data and there is no evidence that Claus has an adequate compliance program in place.

Children across the world who write letters to Claus with a list of gift requests are not told for how long that data is kept, or if it will be used for other purposes such as marketing by third parties.

The Data Protection Act stipulates that data should not be kept for longer than necessary, which would mean 25th December, though Claus may argue that he needs to keep the letters for six years to use in any gift-related lawsuits.

"There is a stream of questions Santa has yet to an-

swer," said William Malcolm, a data protection specialist at Pinsent Masons. "Is this information used for anything other than present giving?"

Attempts to put the questions to Claus were hindered by the lack of an office chimney. Eventually the questions were put up a domestic chimney but no response was received by time of publication.

The Data Protection Act says that you must inform someone when you are collecting data about them, and tell them what the purpose of collection is.

"What about the naughty/nice database?" said Malcolm. "Are children given notice that behavioural data is being collected about them throughout the year? And does it qualify as covert monitoring, which would breach Article 8 of the European Convention on Human Rights?"

There are many possible applications for the Naughty/

YULTIDE SUPPORT

It's the time of year when the Christmas decorations come out, and a few people like to spruce up their computers with Christmas wallpapers, screensavers and cursors.

This usually ends in a call to us, as many of the Christmas themed packages available for download include malware (see page 2), which can turn a bit of fun into a slow, cranky computer.

If you feel like decorating your workspace, we recommend a bit of tinsel, or perhaps a USB powered Christmas Tree.

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ASP RECOMMENDS - MALWARE TOOLS

Malware (Malicious Software) is software designed to infiltrate a computer without the knowledge of the user. Malware is broken into several categories – viruses, worms, trojans, rootkits, spyware, adware, crimeware and scareware. Most of you would know about viruses and possibly spyware; however the others may be new terms. In essence Malware can cause grief for many users and can often end in tears.

When it comes to Malware and stopping infection, the best attack is diligence. Always be prudent as to what you download or open from the Internet and e-mails, never just click yes to the pop up message – if you're not sure then ask someone what it is and what it means. The most common way of obtaining Malware is through spam

(illegitimate e-mail) where the spammer is trying to get you to click on something in the message or to open the attachment - often leading to a dodgy web site which may even look quite innocuous, however once you click or open the damage is done.

Software solutions are very important – most of you would have a good Antivirus program already – however many of these do not stop other forms of Malware. So if you feel you might have a Malware infection here are some free tools you can use. Spybot S&D (www.spybot.com), is probably the most common free tool around to remove Malware, however it works reactively so you need to run and update manually each time. Dr Web CureIT (www.freedrweb.com/cureit), is another tool which

also finds and removes Viruses and has two levels of scans for a quick and full scan, and like Spybot, it too needs to be run manually. Windows Defender (www.microsoft.com/defender) is Microsoft's free Malware tool; and this works proactively to try to stop Malware from installing on your PC (but it doesn't).

A point to note though is that these tools (including Antivirus programs) are not foolproof and are never a substitute for diligence, and they often need to work together to remove infections.



SIX WORD STORY

Mind of it's own. Damn lawnmower.

- David Brin

NAUGHTY OR NICE?

Nice database - how about coming home and logging on to naughtyornice.com to find out how your kids have behaved today? British and US intelligence are also rumoured to be interested in the technology that Claus uses to generate the

lists, as it would be far easier to decide which world leaders to deal with if they knew which ones were naughty and which were nice.

People can make a subject access request of databases

holding their personal information, but the database operator has 40 days in which to respond. Children are now too late, therefore, to find out before Christmas if they are on the naughty or nice section of the system.

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ASP TESTS - GOOGLE ANALYTICS

Ever wondered how many people have visited your web site, where they came from, how they got there, or even what browser they were using?

Google Analytics (www.google.com/analytics) is possibly the answer. Google Analytics is a tool that can be added to your web site code and will log all visits to your web site, including all sub pages, giving you the tools to know how well your page is ranking on search engines or if you need to make any changes.

Google Analytics will show visitors to your site graphically, and

breaks this down into several categories including benchmarking, languages, visitor trends, visitor loyalty, browser capabilities and network properties.

Then there is the Traffic Sources section showing where the visitors have come from, how they found you – what they searched for on search engines to get to your site, allowing you to modify your search engine optimisation tools to get a greater number of hits.

The best thing about Google Analytics is it's easy to setup, and it's free!

December in Tech History

On December 3, 2001, Dean Kamen revealed his newest invention - the Segway Human Transporter. It had been kept secret until then, with rumours suggesting it was a flying car or a water purifier.

On December 11, 1901, Marconi tried to send the first radio signal across the ocean. The previous record for transmitting a radio signal was 80 miles. On December 12, Marconi succeeded in sending a signal 2,000 miles across the Atlantic Ocean.

John Lawrence began treating a 28 year old leukemia patient on 24th December, 1936, with a radioactive isotope developed by his brother. It was the first time radiotherapy was used to treat a human disease, and led to the field of radiology.

ASP CHRISTMAS CLOSURES

The asp office will be closed from midday 24th December until Monday 5th January. Help desk will still be available by calling 08 8291 5000 during this time

I want it - how can I get it?

All of the Malware tools and Google Analytics are available free on the web.

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VAGUELY INTERESTING HOLIDAY SHOPPERS BEWARE

Santa may be on to something. The reason all his toys are made at the North Pole appears to have less to do with loving hand craftsmanship, and more to do with avoiding holiday shopping carnage.

Black Friday shopping, the traditional beginning of Christmas shopping on the day after Thanksgiving in the US claimed 3 lives this year. Two men were shot (by one another) in a Toys R Us store after their respective female companions started arguing and then physically attacking one another, and a Wal-Mart employee was trampled to death by the crowd bursting into the store.

Emergency departments in the US treat approximately 21,000 children under the age of 5 for

shopping trolley related injuries each year - two thirds of these are head injuries. 6,000 injuries per year are caused by escalators in the US.

Even an uneventful shopping trip can cause injuries. Increases in the number of patients with back, shoulder and neck pain happen every year as a result of carrying shopping bags which are too heavy, or carrying bags for too long. Injuries also occur if the distribution of the weight of shopping bags is not even on both sides of the body.

Shoppers who are tired, hungry and sore from all the lifting and carrying will be grumpy, and running low on Christmas spirit. Best to keep your distance, because lovely little old ladies have been known to kill.

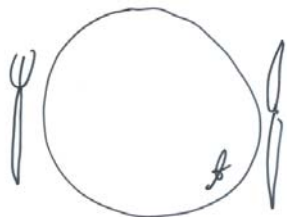


We all have to remember that it's not the gift but the thought that counts, and if you are lucky enough to receive a gift from a loved one, the fact that they cared enough about you to go out into that chaos just to retrieve a gift to show you they care should warm your heart long before you see what's inside the wrapping.

It got a little hokey - sorry.

ASP BYTES: FESTIVE SEASON RECIPE

Stuff cooking.....



Breaky:

Some cool and rural coffee shop or bakery or even pancake house – have a nice drive and relax. Or if driving isn't relaxing, some cool and close by coffee shop or bakery or even pancake house. And if that's too hard, Subway or Macca's breakies do work and aren't too bad at all.

Lunch:

Still full from breaky, so no need to worry there.

Dinner:

Indian, Chinese, Greek, Italian – even pizza – anything to not have to go near the kitchen. It's Christmas, RELAX!

Yield: however many that you have with you.

Prep Time: just order.

Cook Time: depends how busy they are.

Difficulty: Easy – all you have to worry about is what you're doing next.

Merry Christmas