

# Extreme Scam Warning !

## Con men pretending to be from Microsoft

### PHONE CON: No, that is not "Microsoft" calling

Have you had a man from Microsoft ring up and advise your computer is virus infected?  
If so, you're one of many Australians targeted in a phone scam.

## DO NOT FOLLOW THEIR INSTRUCTIONS HANG UP THE PHONE IMMEDIATELY !

Forget email distribution — the latest malware scam to hit Australia involves people making telephone calls and pretending to be from your support provider or PC company, and providing over the phone "instructions" to fix the problem which actually turn your machine into a potential spam-spreading zombie.

Reader Todd Hansen from support firm Wagga Systems contacted APC after a flood of calls from concerned customers. "We've had dozens of clients call us up about the 'Indian man from Microsoft'," he said.

In a typical version of the scam, callers are told that their machine is being monitored either by Microsoft or by their anti-virus provider, and an infection has been detected. The caller then offers to walk the customer through the steps needed to fix the (non-existent) problem. The instructions provided install remote control software on the machine, making it usable as part of a bot network and also potentially allowing it to track personal details such as account numbers or passwords.

Adding insult to injury, in many cases customers are also asked to provide credit card details in order to pay a service fee, with \$270 one figure often quoted. Some of Wagga Systems' customers become suspicious when the instructions for "fixing" the machines in turn triggered legitimate warnings from their security software.

Other instances of the scam are being reported around the globe, with a UK county council posting a warning on its site. Security blog The H Security also noted that the people behind the scam don't respond well when challenged: "When confronted with the fact that there was no problem with his PCs and that we already knew they were scammers the caller became steadily more abusive and threatening, repeatedly swearing, apparently from a script, before eventually hanging up. "

The lesson? As ever, ignore anyone who makes an unsolicited phone call and starts asking for information of any kind, especially if it concerns PC security and/or your credit card number. Don't get into a discussion with them — just hang up. If a call makes you suspicious, contact the ACCC's **Scamwatch line on 1300 302 502**.

<http://www.scamwatch.gov.au>