

## TAINTED ADS BAD FOR ADVERTISERS AND CONSUMERS



The online advertising agencies are working fast to rid the Internet of a persistent problem that does not appear to want to go away any time soon. In fact, the issue is only getting worse, according to an article written by Byron Acohido, a writer for USA Today. According to Acohido, the spread of tainted advertising ads, which have appeared on many well-known websites, are increasing in numbers. New changes in the world of malvertisements have lead to increasing threats for consumers and advertisers. Publishers and advertisers are feeling the heat from the malicious ads that advertisers and ad networks, according to security researches and technologists. The number of infected ads on well-known websites has increased times ten, according to research conducted by a security intelligence firm called RiskIQ. This information was disclosed to the public during a Online Trust Alliance conference held in Washington D.C. At its height, over 14,000 of infected malvertisements took place during May of this year alone. This is up by 1533 instances that happened during May 2010. The number of potentially infected PCs is astounding. One ad, placed on a popular, well-traveled website, could have tainted up to a million or more visitors that click on the ad, according to Elias Manousos, CEO of RiskIQ. Manousos says that infected malvertisements have appeared on weather.com, monster.com and usnews.com. This is only a short list of well-known websites that have or have had malicious advertisements on their sites. Over 500 of the websites that see high amounts of traffic have come under attack from maladvertisements within the past twelve months alone, according to security research conducted to gather information about tainted ads. Organized crime rings have managed to streamline the process of placing ads into the distribution centers run by ad agencies, which, in turn, leads to the infiltrate of these ads on well-known websites around the web. According to Vincent Lu, managing partner of security consultancy Stach & Liu "malvertisements are a popular and extremely effective mechanism that take advantage of weaknesses within Web browsers." An average PC user not well versed in Internet security, has a high risk of seeing an infection in his or her computer. A website security firm, Armorize, found out that criminals sell tool kits and tutorials on how to break the lock on the Internet-based ads. These kits are available for anyone looking to learn how to infect the Internet with malicious viruses using ads. The best way to protect yourself from receiving a virus from one of these malicious ads; or, from any other source where viruses are present is to update your antivirus software. Make sure you update your Adobe Flash and PDF. You can also block all ads from appearing on websites by installing an ad blocker browser plug in such as Adblock, according to USA today.