

From: "Ben Edelman" <ben@benedelman.org>
To: "Ed Bott" <edbott@edbott.com>
Subject: RE: more on Blinkx adware
Date: Tue, 01 Apr 2014 13:12:18 +0000
Importance: Normal

My draft is here: <http://www.benedelman.org/news/03xx14-1.html>. Please do not redistribute that link, or its contents, until I post it. But do take a look – I think you'll be alarmed by what Blinkx is doing.

Advertisers, ad networks, investors, regulators and others have asked me about adware for a decade. Some of them pay me. No great secret there. Blinkx last month made much of the fact that some investors asked me to look into current practices at Blinkx. I at all times disclosed that, though some people want to know more (e.g. what investors) which I don't consider appropriate. As to how the prior article came about: The investors asked me what Blinkx was doing; I took a look, and when I realized there was so much adware still emanating from Blinkx (adware many people thought was shut down), I made it a priority to write my January 2014 piece about Blinkx. Notably, the investors didn't ask or require me to do so, and only a portion of that article grew out of what those investors had asked me about. As to the draft linked above: No one asked me to do this or paid me to do any of it. All a hobby, very much at my peril, in that I really "should" be 100% focused on academic writings for my tenure case (submission due in about a year). Can't resist the temptation to write about adware.

From: Ed Bott [mailto:edbott@edbott.com]
Sent: Tuesday, April 01, 2014 8:36 AM
To: Ben Edelman
Subject: RE: more on Blinkx adware

Hi Ben,

I am very interested. I leave today for Microsoft's Build conference in SF, back Friday. I will read through this today and yes, please send a draft when it's ready.

I might want to make this part of a larger examination of how the worst parts of the uncontrolled desktop software industry have basically taken over the market. A reader asked me the other day if I could offer advice on how to teach his kids to avoid crap like this, and although I can give him some advice, I'm afraid there's really no good answer to that.

Because the subject always comes up... Is your current research sponsored?

Best,

Ed

From: Ben Edelman [mailto:ben@benedelman.org]
Sent: Tuesday, April 1, 2014 6:25 AM
To: Ed Bott
Subject: more on Blinkx adware

Ed,



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Long time! As I mentioned in my message in February, I'm back on the adware beat: I stumbled into the rebirth of Zango adware (which you probably remember from half a decade ago), now with new names and now run by what was, until recently, a billion-dollar (market capitalization) British company, Blinkx. Then I wrote about this, investors soured on the company, at which point Blinkx attacked me personally. (You'll see a firestorm of February articles. I'm told Blinkx had several publicists working on this behind the scenes.) Now, finally, discussion is shifting back to substance.

Two key references:

My initial posting: <http://www.benedelman.org/news/012814-1.html>

Blinkx's rebuttal (yesterday): <http://www.blinkx.com/corporate/blog/post?id=1>

I'm planning a reply, probably next week. It will be compelling – more terrible Blinkx installations (disclosing material effects only midway through a license agreement, not in prominent on-screen text as FTC precedent and commissioner statements instruct) among other improprieties. Given your investigative tendencies, I thought you might be interested in this – at least in reproducing what I'll be posting (I can send you advance access to the draft) and maybe even in finding some more examples of your own.

Ben

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