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The Geek Patrol's on the case

By Dave Breakenridge, Calgary Sun

For people worried a stalker may have infected their computer with a program to control their Compaq, monitor their Mac or dominate their Dell, guys like John Leishman are on the case. Leishman is owner of The Geek Patrol, one of hundreds of companies across the country that offer assistance for people who have had their computers corrupted.

"That's how we do business every day," Leishman said, adding he's dealt with a lot of cases where a back-door virus installs a key-logger on the unsuspecting owner's computer, allowing people access to virtually anything on the hard drive.

"Once someone gets on your computer, you wouldn't always know it," he said. "They want to operate without you knowing about it and they're really hard to protect against."

Once the offender has access to another person's computer, the prying eyes can be privy to all sorts of information a stalking victim would not want people knowing.

Prospective computer buyers need to make sure they're installing properly configured anti-virus software and a firewall.

Leishman said users might not know a key-logger or spyware has been installed, but warning signs include: The computer starts functioning very slowly and files or folders of unknown origin appear.

Companies like Leishman's are also able to help people configure their computers so they keep a record of e-mails and online conversations, in the event someone may be receiving unwanted electronic communication.

"We had a customer, a lady, whose 13-year-old daughter was being harassed by a guy from England," Leishman said.

"It's easy for companies like us to get rid of, but for many, that kind of thing is really disturbing."