

## Disgusted with Malware, Scientist Dedicates Hermit-Like Existence to Serving Safe, Free Software Downloads

"Malware sucks! After I lost countless hours of research due to an infected 'free' download, I searched fruitlessly for a reliable, trusted source of safe, free software. SafeFreeSoftware.com is my contribution to the solution."

Like the Trojans and their proverbial Trojan horse, he opened the walls of his network **security** to a most deadly enemy, and he did so intentionally. As an impoverished graduate student at the University of Houston Bioinformatics Laboratory, Stephen Huff regularly relied on freeware, shareware, trialware and other forms of free software to complete his assignments. Says Huff, "It's the only way we could get the **apps** we needed to perform the rare, occasional task; like creating a graphic or **developing** some esoteric applet. We could get operating systems and the

big, popular suites cheaply through the university, but these programs are of limited academic use at the graduate level." As a solution, he turned to his favorite search engine, and like thousands of other innocent victims around the world he queried the key words 'free software' and 'free download'. The choices seemed as endless as the **internet**, itself.

"Of course, I left out one, vital, additional key word." Huff says he should have added the word 'safe' to his query string. Consequently, he made a poorly informed decision, selected the wrong source for his download, and infected his computer with a Trojan horse. The unknown master of the malware immediately changed the administrative password on Huff's operating system, and the situation quickly deteriorated from there. Within hours, he lost all data generated since his last backup, and the infection forced him to wipe his hard drive and re-install his applications.



Stephen Huff, Computational Biologist, Frustrated Freeware User, and Curator of SafeFreeSoftware.com

Since that time, Huff says he has implemented the same kind of security on his personal networks that he once provided for **business** clients of his professional technology services. As a Microsoft Certified Systems Engineer, he might have known better, but the ugly truth is that malware placements are as sneaky and conniving as they are damaging and frustrating. In a moment of distraction, anyone can fall victim to the multitude of potential threats that are available on the internet. The trick is to develop safe habits and then use them habitually.

A new way to surf the 'net safely is to do so secondhand. For example, says Huff, rather than downloading unknown software directly from its source, one solution is to download it through a third party that has already downloaded and

scanned the program for malware. In a sense, sites such as SafeFreeSoftware.com act as the bloodhounds of freeware security. By continually scanning all published downloads, SafeFreeSoftware practically eliminates the possibility of spreading infectious malware through its service, but Huff takes security several steps further by also scanning all published images and text, as well. "It's the only way to prevent attacks via image-based buffer overruns and markup injections, for example."

For the internet aficionado who is looking for **audio/video** software or just a simple **game** of Soduku, **SafeFreeSoftware.com** is *the* globally trusted source of freeware, shareware, and trialware. Indeed, Huff has dedicated his monk-like existence to ensure the veracity of this simple claim. With characteristic jocularly, he asserts pointedly, "Hey, I'm a married doctoral candidate... it's not like I have a life, otherwise."