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## **"Private Detectives" Jailed for Espionage**

### *And for installing spyware on business computers*

Scenario: you own a large business and a private investigation firm comes to you and says "Hey, we could give you precious information regarding your competitors at very low prices!". What would you answer? Many businesses turn to such agencies and unfortunately, it isn't such a good thing as it sounds. Mostly because the so called "detectives" will actually deploy samples of spyware on your competitors' computers as they promised you to give valuable information about them. The problem is obviously that this is illegal and if caught, the spies may spend several years behind bars. Such a case occurred a few days ago as four members of the Modi'in Ezrahi firm, which pretends to be a private investigation one, were jailed for dropping spyware files on several business computers, as they agreed to provide valuable information concerning the rivals of certain companies. According to security company Sophos, the manager of the firm received a sentence of 19 months behind bars while the CEO was fined \$72,000. Two employees received sentences of 18 and 9 months in prison. "It's understandable that firms would want information on what their business rivals are planning to do, and try to seek a competitive advantage over them. What isn't acceptable is to hire firms that will use illegal methods, such as computer spyware, to gather that information," said Graham Cluley, senior technology consultant at Sophos. "Firms need to be very careful about the third parties they hire to help them grow their business, and seek assurances that their partners will not be behaving unethically or illegally. If they do not, the consequences could not only be a swathe of bad publicity but also a spell in prison." As always, both individuals and companies are advised to keep their computers protected with up-to-date security solutions that would be able to block all kinds of attacks, including spyware and Trojan horses.