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CastleCops was shut
down for good
CastleCops

[Security Board CastleCops Closes Operations](#)

After serving the IT community for nearly seven years

For hundreds of CastleCops volunteers, Christmas has not brought good news this year, as reports about their beloved website closing down have surfaced. The community behind the project directed their efforts over the years towards tracking phishing campaigns, analyzing malware, training users and offering free assistance with cleaning systems.

CastleCops dates back to February 2002 and was originally named ComputerCops. It was the creation of Paul Laudanski, who used to work as an analyst and engineer for Comcast. The board became popular for maintaining Windows CLSIDs, Startup, Toolbar and other similar lists that made for good resources for people searching for malware removal instructions. The board was also a popular place for posting and analyzing logs from HijackThis and other tools.

The community-driven website has seen many changes and additions throughout the years. In 2004, it changed name to CastleCops, a training program for new interested users was started, and specialized teams like PIRT, the Phishing Incident Reporting and Termination Squad, or MIRT, the Malware Investigation Response Team, were created. Due to countless hours of volunteer work and talent, the website established numerous working relationships with law enforcement officials and big organizations.

The success of the board also prompted Microsoft to hire its founder, Paul Laudanski, in June 2008, as a Safety Investigator working with the Live Consumer Services group, focusing mainly on investigating phishing and spam campaigns. While this was great news for Paul and his real-life family, for his online family, CastleCops, it meant finding a new leader, which proved harder than initially thought. According to some, this is also one of the primary reasons for the website shutting down.

"You have arrived at the CastleCops website, which is currently offline. It has been our pleasure to investigate online crime and volunteer with our virtual family to assist with your computer needs and make the Internet a safer place. Unfortunately, all things come to an end," reads the [message](#) posted on the front page of the website.

The security board has seen its share of DDoS or defamation attacks over time, but successfully it survived all of them. However, with the recent denial of service attacks constantly crippling the operations of the website, and with the apparent lack in leadership, things slowly started to go downhill. A donation marathon was launched in order to gather money for some more powerful servers, but eventually it wasn't enough to revive the community.

"With respect to the server marathon, by March 17 2009 CastleCops will refund contributions made through PayPal that were specifically designated for servers," informs the announcement. Exception are the donations made via check, which will not be returned, but instead will be forwarded to the Internet Systems Consortium, the organization that provided hosting services for CastleCops for the past two years.

Other security or IT-oriented boards, websites and blogs have expressed their appreciation towards CastleCops' efforts and work, as well as their sadness to see them go. "Keep up

the good fight folks, for the spirit of this community lies within each of us. We are empowered to improve the safety and security of the Internet in our own way," encourages Paul Laudanski.

Update: One of our readers, Tony Klein, has kindly informed us that the lists mentioned in this article, which were previously maintained by CastleCops, have been relocated to a new [website](#). In addition, they are constantly updated by several former members of the CastleCops community.