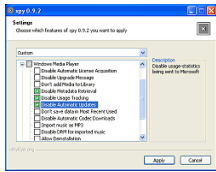


27 November 2005

By: Alex Muradin, Editor, Software Reviews



Patch Up Your System's Security Holes with xpy

Good things come in small packages

Don't Tweak Out! It's not just another tweaking program that'll spice up your system, xpy is the latest little ditty that'll close some of those security holes that Windows XP seems to leave. Another needle in the haystack has been found with xpy 0.9.2. I've been using a lot of separate system modifiers recently and I've finally gotten my hands on xpy, a program that's still in active development. xpy is not your typical tweaking program, it chooses to focus on your system's natural deficiencies and works to correct the gaping security problems you might face. Let's see what all the hype's about. **The Inner Sanctum** Right from the start, xpy stands out from its competitors with a noticeable intro. As a matter of fact, you don't even install it, but instead you unzip this tiny package (a whole 50k download). So there's no need to worry about denting that 300 GIG hard drive any further. The interface is similar to a lot of other tweaking programs out there. You have a basic explorer style window which contains seven items for you to play around with. You have your general, service, IE, WMP, WMessenger, usability and deleted files tabs. From these, you can expand and drop down your views for specifying exactly what you want and don't want done to your system's preferences. A cool little addition is that xpy closes recent security holes like the remote procedure call (rpc) service and the distributed component object model (dcom). xpy also comes with a few built in presets for users who want to see a little change, but don't exactly know what they want. The first of these is absolutely no change to your system whatsoever, then you get the following; XP Antispy settings, all possible settings (auto-detect), all settings or your very own custom settings. Each one is individually tailored according to their name. I still don't know how they've managed to cram so much info into such a small package, but I digress. I liked this program even though it came right out of a zip. The problem I had with xpy was that it is also very powerful. It is recommended for every user to read the manual before applying any and every tweak and this program isn't an exception to the rule. If you blindly enable all your settings, you're in for a big surprise. You will find that not only can no one penetrate your system, but you can't even get out yourself. It's somewhat too secure at if you don't know what you're messing with. It has a tendency to block a lot of sites if you enable all the settings. If you have the time to mess around and enable/disable cookies, Xcontrols, etc, xpy is definitely your tool, if not... well, don't expect too much but hassles and disappointment. Another fact that I should tell users is that this little guy will also NOT show up in your Add/Remove programs. So if you're a little inexperienced but still want to secure your system, give xpy a try, but remember to create a restore point using your System Restore. **The Good** It does what it says it can do. A small and powerful tool that you could use to further safeguard and secure your system. **The Bad** There are a few things that should be addressed. The first is that I would have liked to see a little more description with what's going to be changed rather than a little fluff sentence rewording what the tab says. The second fact is that this can really irritate the more inexperienced user if they apply all settings. If you go ahead and log onto the program's website, it specifically states that they don't recommend any specific settings, but instead they tell you that you should choose and specify the settings that you need. **The Truth** xpy is definitely not for the inexperienced user. You need to have pretty good knowledge of what settings you're messing with because xpy doesn't offer good enough explanations in their little recaps/descriptions. This tool is highly recommended to power users who are tired of having to worry about Microsoft and their constant updates and patches. Secure your own system with the help of this tool. Check out some pics below.