

Hotbar settles adware spat with Symantec

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Israeli firm Hotbar.com has settled a lawsuit filed over a security company's right to label Hotbar as "low risk adware," the Hebrew news Web site Ynet said.

According to the terms of the settlement, Symantec will be allowed to label Hotbar applications as "low risk adware" and will guide users in erasing the applications from their systems.

Hotbar offers diversions such as animations, e-cards and emoticons on its home page.

"Low risk is something we generally recommend that users can ignore. Medium risk is something we quarantine, and high risk is something we automatically remove," David Cole, a director of Symantec Security Response, said in a statement.

"Hotbar's programs operate in the low risk category and we leave it up to the customer to decide whether or not to remove the programs," he said.

Symantec had charged in the 2005 lawsuit that Hotbar's application follows an Internet surfer's actions, collects information about the surfer's Internet habits and uses that information to target-advertise to the user, Ynet reported.

A Hotbar spokesman said via Ynet that Symantec's "low risk" category is relatively new. "Hotbar is satisfied with the settlement reached with Symantec and we hope to arrive at similar understandings with the rest

of the world's anti-virus companies," the spokesman said.

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