Google Hold'em Poker: Does Google Have An OS Up Their Sleeve?

December 19 2008, by Mary Anne Simpson

(PhysOrg.com) -- Google card shark watchers have been placing side bets on the possibility that Google may be holding back some news on a new OS. The search giant has been the subject of rumors in Forbes, BoyGenius Blog, Google Watch and more. Forbes' intriguing article title is, " Google's Invisibility Cloak" stokes the fire with a not so "Elementary my dear Watson" approach. The genesis of the speculation is a "Eureka" moment from Net Applications a company in Aliso Viejo that produces an analytic software for tracking Internet trends around the world.

Net Applications came up with the novel discovery that somewhere between 11-percent to 30-percent of Web traffic streaming out of Google is cleaned of identifying information. The call of the story is, "That begs the question: What secret is it that Google doesn't want the rest of the Web to know." Sounds mysterious, it's too bad the writer and Net Applications didn't read, Forbes' How To Erase Your Tracks Online,

or for non-readers [In Pictures: Eight Ways To Guard Your Online Privacy](#), September 08, 2008 slide show.

The Boy Genius Report casts a "Ree-hee-healy?" to Net Applications' blockbuster discovery which in sum goes, "We have never seen an OS stripped of the user agent string before." I believe you have to arrange to have that happen, it's not something we have seen before in a proxy server." Net Applications, "The Movie" then sums up the insidious plot by saying. "All I can tell you is there's a good percentage of the people at Google showing up [at Web pages] with their OS hidden," according to a Net Applications spokesperson. Boy Genius, has his own idea of the Google's Magical Mystery OS. See: Google Working on a New Mystery OS, December 6 post. His post and comments take some of the air out of the floating rumors. It's worth a fun read time.

Google Watch by Clint Boulton, congratulates his former colleague Andy Patrizio for "ferretting out a fascinating new Google rumor" spawned by his interview of a Net Applications spokesperson. His conclusion is essentially, if many Googlers are running a clandestine OS of an undetermined origin, "this would fit the Google MO, wouldn't it?", referencing the September 2 launch of Chrome after two-years of back and forth.

Blount is hardly awestruck by the idea Google might want to go it alone with their own OS and in the process cut into Microsoft's behemoth IE. His sources speculate that the "Web Only" browser Chrome could be the front door to access some kind of big social network where OpenID reigns or possibly a combo of Chrome and its extension application Gears. He quotes Rob Enderle of the Enderle Group, who said a Google OS would be an extension of Android OS recently released for mobile phones and big plans for future devices. Blount presents a query, "Could Google employees be surfing the Web on Android phones?

Comments on the Forbes, "Google's Invisibility Cloak" are priceless. Credit where credit is due goes to "Levifig" referencing Google's penchant for secrecy, he posts the following, " Secrecy isn't the opposite of Openness in the business world! Why would Google let other companies into their business strategy?? Why would they have a great idea and have their competitors market it, especially when most of their competitors would charge what they would release for free?? Seriously..." Another gem by "Fantomaster" who isn't sure if he should laugh or cry at the speculation about Google's anonymity mystery. His insightful post points out that faking UAs is like an Al Gore moment. It is has been done for years and "Incidentally it's one of the tenets of safeguarding your online privacy, too." Personally, I sure hope these two don't read my articles.

In preparation for this story, I found a recent paper by Andrew G. Morgan of Google Inc. and Serge E. Hallyn entitled, "Linux Capabilities: Making Them Work". The paper addresses the modern applications of the Linux system in light of new kernel developments including VFS support and per-process support for bounded-set and secure-bits demonstating the full range of Linux security capabilities. I contacted Andrew G. Morgan for his take on the Google Hold'em Poker OS rumor, but as of this writing I have not heard back.

Forbes Google's Invisibility Cloak story:
www.forbes.com/technology/2008 … x_ew_1205google.html

Boy Genius Blog story:
www.boygeniusreport.com/2008/1 … on-a-new-mystery-os/

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