

## **Scams are as close as your phone**

By

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I just spoke with a member of our community who related a phone call he received. Out of the blue, he was called by a person who said that he was working with Microsoft and wanted him to know that there were a lot of viruses going around in this area. He then asked permission to log onto the person's computer so he could help out.

The first mistake the user made was saying "OK." After the caller logged onto the computer, he went to a website and proceeded to start downloading a virus scanning program. At this point, the computer owner started questioning the guy about his affiliation with Microsoft and how he knew there were viruses on his computer. The caller, of course, tried to keep him on the line and sell him a service.

The whole thing ended with the owner telling the guy he was not interested and hanging up the phone and, I believe, restarting the computer.

Object lesson: No one is legitimately monitoring your computer unless you allow them to do so. Do not fall for any caller claiming to be able to remove viruses or tune up your computer unless you specifically ask for this service. Allow no one to log onto your computer unless you know who they are and trust them. Once they are in your machine, who knows what type of software they will install or what data they will steal? Remember—your first line of defense is your common sense.