

## REVIEWS

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November 20, 2000 - Security - By [REBECCA ROHAN](#)

### The Joke Is On The Vandals

"So we killed a few people, big deal." That's what the vandalized ValuJet Web site announced to the world, as it described plans to "bring dismemberment to a broader travel audience"--all on a page that looked strikingly similar to the original corporate design. Other high-profile organizations falling victim to Web hacks include the CIA, the Department of Justice, Green Peace, the Ku Klux Klan, Six Flags, Spice Girls, Star Wars and the U.S. Army.

If delinquents can break into all those sites, they can probably break into yours. The question is, how long will your Web site send someone else's message to the world before you notice and repair the pages?

WebAgain 2.0 from Lockstep detects changes to Web sites on a schedule you choose and restores vandalized Web pages 24x7. You don't have to be present or take any action--WebAgain will notify you of hacks by SMTP mail, as an entry in the NT Event Log on any computer on your network or via an SNMP (Simple Network Management Protocol) Trap of what it found and repaired. To view details, you can fire up WebAgain's administrator interface from any Windows 98, or higher, computer on the same network as the NT/2000 machine that runs the WebAgain service.

The WebAgain service doesn't have to run on the same equipment as the Web server. In fact, WebAgain can monitor and repair sites remotely--keeping the pristine archive of your Web pages far from the server that vandals have cracked. Running WebAgain remotely through FTP means you can even monitor and repair sites hosted by an ISP. If you have permission to upload files via FTP, then WebAgain can do its job from your own NT/2000 machine using your FTP login and password.

#### How It Works

After quickly installing the WebAgain service, which runs in the background, you install the user-friendly administrator interface. The interface includes a side bar of four icons that let you switch out the type of information in the main viewing area. The icons represent Status, Archive, Quarantine and Message Log.

Status shows your site as "checked and clean" or "altered and repaired," that the FTP server is started and so on. The Archive screen shows the vault of files that will replace documents with unauthorized changes at the Web site. Version 2.0 gives the option to import the archive from the live Web site when you first set up the site with WebAgain. The Quarantine area cordons off rogue files found at your Web site--anything that doesn't perfectly match what's in the archive. We changed a single letter within a file, and WebAgain caught it. Because it detects all changes to files, WebAgain can also repair ISP-thrash (the rough handling files get when system administrators rely on faulty or outdated backups, then experiment with kernel upgrades.) Message Log gives a detailed account of what WebAgain encounters and how it handles it.

#### Win Some, Lose Some

##### Hits

- Works on local or remote Web sites-- even hosted or ISP
- Serves single sites or mirrors
- Detects slightest changes to Web pages
- Easy to use

##### Misses

- To see properties for files in the archive, you must click on only one file and look at a bar below the file list.

#### The Bottom Line

A great product. Immortality is a great last line of defense! Since no Web site can dodge every bullet, let yours spring back to life by itself as it alerts you to hacks and accidental file corruption. A very smart way to protect investments in both the site and the organizational image

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WebAgain either watches a folder where you place ready pages or waits for you to publish pages to WebAgain from your authoring program or your stand-alone FTP program. Version 2.0 also enhances support for getting files from FrontPage. From there, WebAgain publishes the current pages to the Web site and its mirrors, if any. Now, if vandals alter pages or destroy files, WebAgain quietly replaces them like those candles that keep relighting when you blow them out: Vandals attack, and the pages spring back. If crackers silently deposit their own pages to your online Web directory without damaging your pages (in order to illegally exchange files with others or stage an attack on someone else from your directory), Version 2.0 throws the uninvited files into quarantine and alerts you. On the flip-side, Version 2.0 gives you the power to delete files from the quarantine area--and from the archive, in case you decide to remove a file from the Web site and don't want it to reappear. You can exclude files and directories from monitoring if their content is supposed to change.

### **Company Grace Under Pressure**

Installation was easy--a configuration wizard even lets you use a "browse" button to find your directory across the FTP divide to the remote host. We had atypical trouble configuring for the remote site since my ISP's FTP service has some distinctive characteristics only theorized by the WebAgain authors before the encounter with my ISP's configuration, which also didn't communicate to WebAgain whether or not it required a firewall-friendly passive mode connection. WebAgain timed out waiting for an answer. A Lockstep programmer immediately adapted a DLL to accommodate both situations and, although the situation is unusual, the fixed DLL will be part of the official release, available immediately on the Web site to those who got the product before the fix. The same programmer said Lockstep fixes things right away for anyone--even trial users--because they simply must be fixed. Since that time, I changed providers, and there was no need for help from Lockstep to protect the new site.

The WebAgain software isn't meant to be a firewall, or to protect a Web server--and it won't give you reign over your ISP's security--but it will put the horses back in the barn if your ISP leaves the door open. And it will put them back over and over and over--while you snooze, lay on the beach or, more likely, are busy stamping out other fires.

A great product.

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