

# Consumer **ALERT**



ATTORNEY GENERAL OF TEXAS  
GREG ABBOTT

## **Sony Music CDs With XCP Technology Could Harm Computers With Certain America Online (AOL) Software**

In November 2005 Attorney General Abbott sued SONY BMG alleging that approximately 50 titles of music CDs released in 2005 containing XCP copy protection software violated numerous anti-spyware and consumer protection laws. The lawsuit is still pending.

Despite a recall of these potentially harmful CDs, it has been reported to the Office of the Attorney General that about 3.4 million CDs with XCP technology remain unreturned.

As part of its ongoing investigation, the Office of the Attorney General discovered an incompatibility between CDs with XCP technology and computers running certain versions of America Online (AOL) software.

If a consumer has installed America Online's "Safety and Security Center," and also inserts a SONY BMG music CD with XCP technology on the same computer, the anti-spyware program included by AOL will detect XCP and attempt to remove it, but in the process could fail to delete all of the installed components in XCP and cause the CD-ROM drive to "disappear" from the computer's operating system. As a result, consumers might not be able to play any type of music, DVD or data CD in their drive. In those instances, it would appear as though there was never even a CD-ROM drive installed.

AOL's anti-spyware product is a version of Computer Associates' "Pest Patrol." This same conflict exists when consumers use the stand-alone version of "Pest Patrol." Computer Associates has recently rolled out a patch which fixes this problem in its stand-alone product ([www.pestpatrol.com](http://www.pestpatrol.com)).

The Office of the Attorney General has notified both SONY BMG and America Online of this problem, and both are working on a solution.

Consumers who have experienced a problem with their computer where their CD-ROM is disabled are urged to file complaints with Attorney General Greg Abbott's Consumer Protection Division, even if they cannot specifically identify XCP or America Online as causing the problem. Complaint forms can be found on the Attorney General's website at [www.oag.state.tx.us](http://www.oag.state.tx.us) or by calling 1-800-252-8011.

(More)

**WRITE TO: Greg Abbott, Office of the Attorney General, PO Box 12548,  
Austin, TX 78711-2548 • (800) 252-8011 • [www.oag.state.tx.us](http://www.oag.state.tx.us)**

## **FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS**

### ***How can I tell if I have purchased a CD with XCP files on it?***

A complete list of XCP CDs released by SONY BMG can be found at <http://cp.sonybmg.com/xcp/english/titles.html>. CDs with XCP will show a small logo on the jewel box, usually the front, that reads "Content Protected." It is believed that five million CDs with XCP files were released in late 2005. Of those, about 1.6 million have been returned.

### ***What is the conflict between SONY BMG CDs with XCP files and AOL's Safety and Security Center software?***

When a SONY BMG music CD with XCP is inserted into a computer which also runs AOL's "Safety and Security Center," the conflict between the two programs could disable the computer's CD-ROM. In some instances, the anti-spyware program included with AOL's product does not fully remove XCP, which leaves components that affect the communication between your computer and your CD-ROM. When this occurs, it might seem that the CD-ROM will have "disappeared" from the computer's operating system.

### ***Does this affect all computers?***

Not everyone will encounter this problem. However, testing has revealed that consumers operating a PC running Microsoft Windows XP may be particularly susceptible.

### ***Does this only happen with AOL's program?***

No. Computer Associates, the maker of the anti-spyware program used by AOL, also sells a stand-alone version called "Pest Patrol." Users of "Pest Patrol" may experience this problem as well. Other anti-spyware applications are being tested to determine if they experience the same problem. Meanwhile, consumers who have inserted a SONY-BMG music CD with XCP into their computer and later discovered their CD-ROM drive missing may file complaints with the Attorney General's Consumer Protection Division at <http://www.oag.state.tx.us/consumer/complain.shtml>.

### ***How do I know if my computer has been affected?***

From Windows, if you double-click the "My Computer" icon, you will see all of the drives currently recognized by the system. If any of your CD drives are missing, you might have been affected. If you suspect that you have used an XCP CD in your computer, you may file a complaint with the Attorney General's Consumer Protection Division, at <http://www.oag.state.tx.us/consumer/complain.shtml>.

### ***How do I fix this?***

If you are running Computer Associates' "Pest Patrol" product, your program should automatically update to fix the problem. If this does not resolve your problem, contact Computer Associates and note this in a complaint to the Attorney General.

If you are running AOL's "Safety and Security Center," there is currently not a fix available. AOL is working on releasing a new version of their software that will include Computer Associates' fix.

### ***How can I prevent this from happening?***

The Office of the Attorney General is warning consumers to avoid inserting CDs with XCP technology into a computer. In fact, SONY BMG CDs with XCP technology are subject to a recall and should be returned to SONY BMG for replacement. Further information about the SONY BMG recall and class action settlement can be found at [www.sonybmgcdtechsettlement.com](http://www.sonybmgcdtechsettlement.com)

(More)

***What CDs are affected?***

A complete list of XCP CDs can be found at <http://cp.sonybmg.com/xcp/english/titles.html>.

***Should I file a complaint?***

If you have experienced the disabling of your CD ROM drive, and suspect that you may have used an XCP CD on your computer, the Office of the Attorney General urges you to file a complaint at <http://www.oag.state.tx.us/consumer/complain.shtml>.

***Can the Office of the Attorney General provide me with technical support assistance if my computer has experienced problems as a result of a SONY BMG music CD?***

While we encourage the filing of consumer complaints, our office is unable provide that type of technical support assistance. Pest Patrol users will have their programs update automatically once they go online. AOL currently is working on a fix for Security Center users. Please consult Pest Patrol and AOL's corresponding Web sites for updates on fixes to this problem.

**ACCESS THE ONLINE VERSION OF THIS ALERT AT  
WWW.OAG.STATE.TX.US TO OBTAIN THE FOLLOWING**

- Pending lawsuit against SONY BMG
- Video of Attorney General Abbott's Nov. 21, 2005 lawsuit announcement against SONY BMG
- Online consumer complaint form
- List of SONY BMG CDs with XCP
- Photographs of SONY BMG CDs with XCP