

August 14. 2008

Subject:

The connection software 3Connect causes extremely excessive file input/output operations, which lowers computer performance

Version of software:

1.0.0 BL 37

Brief description of problem:

Lately I noticed higher hard disk activity on my laptop. By looking at the hard disk activity indicator on the front of my laptop, I could see that disk activity was occurring over and over approx once every second. Worried that I might have gotten some virus or trojan installed, I started to investigate this issue further.

By using Process Monitor from Microsoft (<http://technet.microsoft.com/en-us/sysinternals/bb896645.aspx>), I logged all activity for 15 minutes this morning. By comparing the frequency on the hard disk activity indicator with what I saw in Process Monitor, it was clear that Wilog.exe was the culprit. It writes to a log file every second! The log file in question can typically be found under: C:\Documents and Settings\[user name]\Application Data\Birdstep Technology\EasyConnect\Logfile.txt

During my Process Monitor session, I kept an Internet Explorer open to cause some network activity. This activity was close to nothing, but still the Wilog.exe program was adding approx 2 KB of data to the log file every second.

The output I got from my 15 minutes Process Monitor session can be downloaded at <http://www.christer.dk/Wilog.CSV> (12.5 MB!), which shows how much activity Wilog.exe actually causes on the log file. The repeated writing once every second starts at 09:32:37 and onward.

I have been trying to find a way to turn off logging, by going through all possible settings in the program (Settings -> Advanced settings -> etc. etc.) with no luck. I have also looked through all the configuration files for a way to turn off the logging. Still no luck.

Summary and solution:

The higher disk activity is caused by the connection software to my new USB mobile broadband modem from "3".

The writing to disk every second is by all means very excessive. I had a 5 hour online session today, which caused the Wilog.exe program to write to the log file some 18.000 times, give or take. There's no argument for such excessive file operations. My own computer is fairly new and with high performance CPU and disk, so I only notice a small performance hit - I only worry about my disk. Users with slower CPU's and disk could potentially experience an even bigger performance hit.

I am sure that the purpose of the logging feature is to make it easier for "3" and Birdstep Technology (the supplier of the software) to give users with problems proper help. However, because these file operations causes a performance hit on the computer involved, "3" and Birdstep Technology should, as a minimum, deliver a new version of the software, where it is possible to turn the logging off.

I hope that "3" will resolve this issue fast and follow up on this to me via the e-mail address below.

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