
PeerPressure is a misconfiguration diagnostic tool, used to determine misconfigurations in faulty systems, based on statistics collected from other similar systems.

PeerPressure primarily introduces a ranking metric, based on Bayesian estimation to determine the correctness of registry values on a faulty PC. The key ideas the authors attempt to introduce are the autonomous nature of PeerPressure, and its capability to determine misconfigurations using a small database of existing registry entries, using methods, earlier mentioned.

While the concept of PeerPressure and other similar tools are very useful, there are several concerns that are raised by this paper. Firstly, there’s no case made against malicious programs running on the system. In many cases where a system might be infected with some form of malware, that constantly evolves to elude such diagnostic tools, running PeerPressure would only amount to wasting time.

Also, the paper provides several measurements which do not have any significance to understanding the effectiveness of PeerPressure as compared with other similar tools. In fact, in my opinion, PeerPressure is just a re-implementation of Strider, using another form of statistical analysis. It would have been helpful to see some data enumerating the benefits of PeerPressure over Strider and other similar implementations, mentioned in the related work. Ultimately, the paper fails to show the degree to which it contributes to the subject matter. While it claims it is an automatic tool, the authors contradict this key feature by having the user manually involved in the recovery steps and having to manually build a GeneBank.

Tools like this, with real automatic capabilities, can put companies like GeekSquad on the road towards bankruptcy, while saving the consumer huge amounts of time and money. Future work, in extending PeerPressure to a peer-to-peer distributed network, could have tremendous advantages. Perhaps, this could have been the focus of the authors.