

HAZARDS OF USING A PUBLIC PC

from Kim Komando's newsletter

There's a guy in New York who may have gotten into your personal business. If he did, he probably looted your online bank account.

Juju Jiang is serving time now after pleading guilty. But for a couple years, he bugged public computers at Kinko's with software that logged keystrokes. He used it to capture user names and passwords. Some he used to steal money; others he sold on the Web.

This raises an issue which many people haven't considered. Spying software can easily be placed on public computers, such as those not only at Kinko's stores, but in Internet cafes, airports, libraries and other public places.

Spies usually use software because it is invisible to the untutored eye. However, you can check the computer for spying software. Download X-Cleaner Spyware Remover at <http://www.xblock.com>. Put it on a floppy disk. If the public computer you use has a floppy drive, stick it in. Run X-Cleaner from the floppy and check the hard drive. You do not have to install X-Cleaner.

Software is not the only danger. The browser you use will keep records of where you go and what you do, unless you stop it. So, when you finish surfing with Microsoft Internet Explorer, click Tools > Internet Options. On the General tab, click Delete Files and Delete Cookies. Then click Clear History.

Browsers also track passwords. Before going on the Web, if you're using Internet Explorer, click Tools > Internet Options. On the Content tab, click AutoComplete. Clear the four boxes.

When you finish surfing, again click Tools > Internet Options. Go to the Content tab and click AutoComplete. Click Clear Forms and Clear Passwords.

WHAT YOU SHOULDN'T DO

This clip supposedly dates to 1988 -- and is one of the first-ever virus hoax emails.

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Date 11-31-88 (2460) Number 32769

To ALL Refer# NONE

From ROBERT MORRIS III Read (N/A)

Subj VIRUS ALERT Status PUBLIC MESSAGE

Warning: There's a new virus on the loose that's worse than anything I've seen before! It gets in through the power line, riding on the powerline 60 Hz sub-carrier. It works by changing the serial port pinouts, and by reversing the direction on E's disks spin. More than 300,000 systems have been hit by it here in Murphy, West Dakota alone! And that's just in the last 12 minutes.

It attacks DOS, Unix, TOPS-20, Apple-II, VMS, MVS, Multics, Mac, RSX-11, ITS, TRS-80, and VHS systems.

To prevent the spread of the worm

- 1) Don't use the powerline.
- 2) Don't use batteries either, since there are rumors that this virus has invaded most major battery plants and is infecting the positive poles of the batteries. (You might try hooking up just the negative pole.)
- 3) Don't upload or download files.
- 4) Don't store files on floppy disks or hard disks.
- 5) Don't read messages. Not even this one!
- 6) Don't use serial ports, modems, or phone lines.
- 7) Don't use keyboards, screens, or printers.
- 8) Don't use switches, CPUs, memories, microprocessors, or mainframes.
- 9) Don't use electric lights, electric or gas heat or air conditioning, running water, writing, fire, clothing or the wheel.

I'm sure if we are all careful to follow these 9 easy steps, this virus can be eradicated, and the precious electronic fluids of our computers can be kept pure.

The new Microsoft Office System is coming, and Microsoft is offering a special preview for CCMV/Mindshare User Group members on October 14. This firsthand look will show you how to maximize your productivity at home and at the office, reduce spam, customize your email, and much more. Microsoft has developed a series of interactive pre-launch activities that demonstrate how the latest Microsoft Office System is loaded with features that make it better than ever.

Check our web site for information on upcoming programs, pages 5 and 6 of this newsletter, and summaries of past meetings

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dagan@pe.net

Web Page Address
www.ccmv.net
Take a look and take the poll

Meeting Time and Place
2nd and 4th Tuesday
9: to 11: a.m.
Seventh-day Adventist Church
29885 Bradley Road
Sun City, CA

The BLASTER Worm from the *Trendmicro.com* site

Blaster - WORM_MSBLAST.A (High Risk) — affects unpatched systems running **Windows NT, 2000, XP, and Server 2003**. This worm can only propagate to systems running Windows 2000 and XP. WORM_MSBLAST.A is currently spreading in-the-wild, and has been in heavy circulation.

WORM_MSBLAST.A is a destructive worm that exploits a vulnerability in a Windows, which allows an attacker to gain full access and execute any code on a target machine, leaving it compromised. The virus payload performs a Distributed Denial of Service (DDoS) attack against *windowsupdate.com* on the 16th through the 31st day of every month from January through August, and any day in September through December.

Upon execution, this worm creates an autorun registry entry that allows it to execute at every Windows startup. It creates a mutex named "BILLY," that it uses to check whether another copy is already running. If it finds that another copy is running, it simply terminates. If no other copy is running, it continues with the rest of its routines; sleeping at 20 second intervals and waking to check for Internet connection, until it is able to establish this connection.

Once it secures an Internet connection, this worm checks for the current system date. If the system date is the 16th through 31st day of any month in January through August, or any day of the month of September through December, it launches a thread that performs a Distributed Denial of Service (DDoS) attack against *windowsupdate.com*. When performing the DDoS attack, this worm constructs a specially crafted packet, which it sends to the target site. The packet contains no data except for its TCP/IP header, and is constructed in such a way that the worm can spoof the sender IP address. This worm continuously sends the packet every 20 milliseconds.

To infect unpatched, vulnerable machines, this worm attempts to connect to other target systems via port 135. It does this by opening 20 TCP threads or connections which scan for IP addresses. After creating 20 threads or connection attempts, it uses another method which generates random IP address.

This worm then instructs its remote target machine to download its copy MSBLAST.EXE into the Windows System32 folder; typically C:\Windows\System32 or C:\WINNT\System32. Finally, it instructs the target machine to execute the downloaded file. This begins another life cycle for the worm on the newly infected machine.

The following text strings are visible in this worm's body:
I just want to say LOVE YOU SAN!!
billy gates why do you make this possible ? Stop making money and fix your software!!

If you would like to scan your computer for WORM_MSBLAST.A or thousands of other worms, viruses, Trojans and malicious code, visit HouseCall, Trend Micro's free, online virus scanner at: <http://housecall.trendmicro.com>.

Jim Foley's fabulous *TheElderGeek.com* website

If you run Windows, you'll find probably 20 things at this site that'll solve a problem, show you an easier way, guide you step by step, give you the lowdown, or help you customize something. It's all there. And then some. You will not be disappointed in this place. Several others wrote that they treat TheElderGeek as a Windows bible.



ANOTHER VOLUNTEER by Evelyn Rahn, erahn@inland.net

ED FREEMAN, President of our CCMV was born in Grand Junction, Colorado, moved at age 4, to Sheridan, Wyoming, and grew up while completing high school and two years of Junior college there.

The Korean War began when he was in high school.

He enlisted in the Army and served in Korea and Japan for almost a year while the army was checking that no soldier under 18 was sent unto active combat. (There were more than three hundred of these boys). He was summoned and discharged and sent home. He then returned to and finished high school.

He and Sylvia, his high school sweetheart, married and he went to work for the Wyoming Highway Department. He continued his education while working (two years credit at the local community college). Ed worked for the Highway Department for twenty years. During that time, he and Sylvia had two children --David and Tracy -- and reared two other girls, one a relative who needed a home and the other a girl from a broken home. These foster daughters married. One has five sons and remains in Wyoming. The other was married three years when she had a child and then contracted a rare, fatal kidney disease.

Their son went to college and by the time they decided to go to San Francisco, he was already in Boston working toward his degree in music and theater.

At age 41, Ed and his wife Sylvia decided that he should retire from the Highway Department, move to San

Francisco and get his degree, at San Francisco State. Daughter Tracy finished her education, took employment there and still lives in San Francisco.

After Ed had his bachelors degree, he took a position at University of Texas Pan America near Brownsville as professor of Psychology and Marriage and Family counseling. He, in Texas, and son David, in Boston, received masters degrees the same day; the son two hours ahead of Ed because of time zones.

They then moved to Lubbock, Texas, where Ed taught and worked toward his doctorate at Texas Tech. After finishing the doctorate program, Ed became director of Career Services at SE Missouri State in Cape Girardeau, Missouri. Later, he held the same position at the University of Evansville, Indiana. From there, he retired in 1995. After two years he and Sylvia reached the decision to move to Sun City where they live in the gated community called Casa Murrieta.

Asked if there were any especially fun things (travel, hang gliding, etc.) he had done during his lifetime, he replied that being able to follow his dreams with his wonderful family was his fun. He presents the aura of a perfectly well-adjusted, happy, relaxed man. His marriage to his childhood sweetheart Sylvia is precious to behold.

Sylvia is a beautifully spoken, well-educated lady, who was and is constant support for Ed to follow his dreams. She worked as Office Manager of an architectural firm when they were in Sheridan, Wyoming. When they moved to the various schools, she worked in the offices of the schools. And while in South Texas, she worked in a managerial position for the Community Development Department of South Texas.

CHECK ONLINE FOR COMPUTER WEAKNESSES From komando.com

Computing risks have grown sharply over the last few years. Even knowledgeable people have trouble keeping up with security issues. There are a number of free services that will tell you if you have a problem.

* Your Browser: This free site performs a series of audits designed to test and fix your browser's security vulnerabilities. <http://browsercheck.qualys.com/>

* Viruses: Use Symantec's free checker to hunt viruses. It's at: <http://security.norton.com/default.asp?langid=us&venid=sym>

* Ports: Windows includes ports intended for communication. If you have a firewall, ports should be hidden from hackers. Test yours at:

<http://www.speedguide.net/scan.php>

<http://www.dslreports.com/secureme>

* Windows: Microsoft has a free tool that will scan your system for security problems. It is available for download at: <http://www.microsoft.com/technet/security/tools/Tools/MBSAhome.asp>

One way to block the spam is to turn off Messenger Service. But some anti-virus programs use it to send warnings. So rather than turn it off, use a firewall. Firewall programs block access to communications ports. A popular firewall is ZoneAlarm (<http://www.zonelabs.com>). Just download and install it. ZoneAlarm is free for personal use. Windows XP also includes a firewall that will stop Messenger Service but does not stop outgoing messages such as the payload of the Blaster worm, which is directed at Microsoft but used the wrong address for the denial of service attack.

A FEW OF OUR NEWCOMERS

by Evelyn Rahn, erah@inland.net

*We hope you will want to get acquainted with newcomers.
We want them to feel welcome and eager to participate.*

BILL AND GAIL SWARTWOOD - Bill and Gail joined CCMV in August. Bill is quite knowledgeable about computers and Gail is just beginning. They have laptop computers and using them, they will fill two of the empty chairs/desks in the XP class beginning Sept 8. They may be unique as they moved to Sun City in 1996 as newly weds. They had known each other casually for years, having met in a square dancing group when they were married to previous mates. They had lived in San Bernardino area and Bill had lost his wife of many years. Bill was originally from New York and Gail from Chicago. He moved after WWII to further his education in California He became a programmer for UCLA and advanced to working with and designing systems for larger machines at UCLA. They will be using their PCs now for records and entertainment.

LELAND PUTNAM, nickname of PUT, who is 96 years of age, widowed and living in Sun City since 1962. He says his is the first house built in Sun City. He was born in Wisconsin, grew up in Michigan and moved in 1943 to California. He and his wife had 7 children When Sun City was being built, they moved here as his work was in Riverside. Put was in his own business. He held a very long contract for providing buses and all necessary services for transporting the school children of the Riverside School District.

Leland made the local page of *Press Enterprise* recently (after we had this interview) and he was cited with comments on the history of Sun City and the Cherry Hills Golf Club as he knows it from its beginning.

JACQUELINE HAAS - Jackie has been in real estate many years in New York, in California, and now in Sun City. She and her sister were single and living together in New York — born in Ohio and graduated from Ohio State University — when in 1961 Jackie's sister got married and moved to California. She did not say the year, but Jackie followed them to California because as a real estate agent, she could work anywhere.

Since 1997 she has worked from her home in Sun City with seniors as her main focus. She is now an agent for Teller Williams Real Estate and she has two Web Sites Being self employed she will be free to return to CCMV's meetings when she recuperates from her recent back surgery.

Lon's Freeware of The Month

by Lon Whistler, lwhis@hotmail.com

Exposed! v130 [1.7M] W9x/2k/XP FREE

Identify storage hogs--Exposed! searches and displays images, photos, sound clips, movie clips, and other items found in a computer system. Collect and evaluate these files to see if they're worth keeping, or if they're a system hogger. If they're a hog, delete 'em! The collected images can be viewed in a slideshow for reviewing while multitasking. It has a nice interface and works impressively fast. Exposed! scanned 126,000 files in under five minutes. The purpose is to find forgotten or hidden files and free system space so the system can work faster. Even though I "deleted" temporary files from Internet Explorer, the program still found 359 Internet images and 612 Web pages on the hard drive. As usual, use caution when using a cleanup program.

RESTORE POINTS from Scot's Newsletter

<<http://www.scotsnewsletter.com/>>

First, what is System Restore? This built-in recovery system in Windows XP theoretically makes automatic daily saves of your Windows Registry files so that you can revert to a previously good state in the event of system trouble. Roughly speaking, Windows makes one to three weeks of System Restore points. While you might be able to rely on an automatically created System Restore point, it's much better to create a restore point manually, naming it something like "Prior to ZoneAlarm Pro 4.0 Setup." That way, you'll know exactly which restore point to use if you need to use one.

System Restore is no panacea. If you make multiple significant changes to your Windows installation, it could even conceivably cause more problems than it solves. For example, if you install Program A on Monday and Program B on Wednesday, and you start having trouble with Program A on Thursday, and treat the problem by reverting to your pre-Program A System Restore point, you will render both Program A and Program B inoperable.

System Restore is also not a substitute for uninstalling programs. You should uninstall all programs that you have installed since a restore point before you revert to that restore point.

Once you know its limitations, System Restore is a useful tool. To learn more, check out Windows XP's Help and Support Center. Run a search for System Restore, and you'll find several very useful links. To make saving restore points easier, drag and Ctrl-drag-and-drop the System Restore icon (whose location is described above) to the top of the Start menu.

Commonsense Ways to Fight Spam

Michael Bugden – who gets very few spam messages – wrote with his personal set of rules for avoiding spam.

1. Avoid signing up for discussion forums and other websites that require you to give your email address unless you use a throwaway email address, even though a few of them claim they don't make that info available.
2. Do not use an email address at Hotmail or Yahoo or any large email provider, as they are prime targets for spammers. Large ISPs like EarthLink and Comcast are similar targets, by the way. And you should be careful using your ISP's email address. Smaller providers are just not worth the trouble to most spammers. That's why you should sign up for and use such an email address for anything on the Internet where you have to give out your email address, such as website registrations where you purchase things online, online banking, and so on. The beauty of this approach is that if and when such an email address becomes a spam magnet, you can ditch it and get another one.
3. When you do sign up to a newsletter, website registration, or the like, pay special attention to check boxes that ask for the right to share your email address or to send you messages "from partners." Be careful to always disallow this.
4. Do not post in Usenet newsgroups with an important email address. Do not allow your email address to be published on any website, ever.
5. Do not send joke messages to 65 of your friends, and if you get one of those, do not pass it along. Do not respond to messages with large numbers of recipients. Most people should never send an email to any more than 10 or 15 people at once.
6. Never, ever reply to an unsolicited mail selling a product or service – even if you want that product or service. If everyone followed this rule, spam would wither up and die.
7. If you get an unsolicited email, do not reply or click a link in it – even if it's not apparently selling something. More than likely the message's entire purpose is to confirm that your email address is valid. Just delete the message.
8. When selecting a new email address, don't pick a short one that's easy to remember. Spammers are increasingly turning to random email address generators to make their work easier, and a short email address is much easier to stumble upon that way.
9. Don't under any circumstances use your own real name or a "cute" nickname. You'll get every porn spam that goes around.

Lost the Recycle Bin icon from the desktop?

When it happens, it is usually because the operating system has lost a pointer that tells it where that icon should be, so it just does not show up at all. Sometimes it is a missing garbage can, or Recycle Bin, as Microsoft puts it. Sometimes it can be the wrong icon altogether - the Word icon for the Web browser and such.

Either way it is easy to fix. Just move the cursor arrow out on the desktop, right-click and pick Properties. Now select Desktop and click on the General tab. You will find a little screen showing all the desktop icons - My Computer, Recycle Bin, Internet Explorer, etc.

Use the mouse to highlight the Recycle Bin. Now look for the little button below for Restore Defaults. Clicking that will bring back the garbage can or Recycle Bin. [Jim Coates, Chicago Tribune]

– courtesy Celia Douglas

Also from Celia Douglas –

My computer was on, resting, and while in another room I kept hearing the chime sound coming from my computer. Mystified, I decided to open my "Sound" file in the Control Panel. Sure were a lot of things checked, and with the chime sound. So which one was the culprit? Time to clean house. The cute sounds and remarks no longer interest me.

I was going to uncheck, individually, all the ones that had been checked; but I accidentally hit the delete" button and it did the job for me. Then I checked six items that were important to me and clicked distinctive sounds for each. The preview lets you listen to the sounds. With my mature memory, no way am I going to remember the sounds I assigned to various items, so I made a "cue card" to refer to when I heard a strange sound.

The item that has puzzled and worried me for a long while because I feared what could happen is the "Low Battery". I put the "toccata" sound on that one. It really will shake me up.

I had fun doing this. Maybe you would, too.

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P.S. from the editor: At one time, there was a Cue Card about recording your own short messages or other sound "bites" on the computer. You can also tuck these into the folder of sounds (or "media" in ME and XP) and use them for Windows functions. For example, when my Win98 boots, the robot from "Lost in Space" says "Yes, master," which was recorded from a cable showing of the film. Short musical clips also make a nice change from the Windows choices. You can also use these as e-mail attachments. Say "hello" in person.

Linux Moves In.

by Orv Beach orv@orvspace.net

An 'operating system' is the collection of software programs that runs computers, including your PC. Once upon a time it seemed like it was inevitable that everyone would use Microsoft software everywhere. How things can change in a few short years! The increasing utility and usability of Linux have caused many people to take a serious look at it. Those looks have led to an explosion in the use of Linux. The robustness and openness of this twelve-year old software 'phenomenon' are well known in the computing community. Uptimes of over a year are considering unremarkable when a computer is running Linux.

Originally used mostly as a server platform, Linux has improved so much over the last couple of years that many companies are now looking to deploy it on the desktop. The GUI (Graphical User Interface) has improved in usability and looks (leading to the phrase "eye candy"). Its increasing ease of use, and simplified installation and configuration, are making it more attractive for home desktops, too.

Unlike Microsoft OS's, many applications you'd need to buy come with Linux. Things like OpenOffice, a complete suite of great desktop apps compatible with MS Office; a great graphics program GIMP, to rival Printshop, and many other applications all come with the CD's, at the same low, low price! When you do a Linux installation they're all installed, and can be found on the menus for your use.

Yes, Linux is inexpensive. It can be had for as nothing, by just downloading the ISO (CD) images from the net. (See <http://www.redhat.com/download/mirror.html> for sites you can download Red Hat Linux from.) Or, if you're relatively inexperienced, buying a copy of a Linux distribution at your local store is a good way to start: you get some great documentation with the CD's.

There are specialized versions of Linux, too. If you're interesting in trying Linux, you can do so without even loading it on your hard disk. Knoppix Linux is a Linux that runs right off of a CD. Buy running it, you can get your feet wet with Linux without making a commitment. Knoppix Linux is found at <http://www.knoppix.net/>. Others are designed to run strictly as a firewall for your household. They're fast and easy to install and configure. Search google for Smoothwall, IPCop, or ClarkConnect; I use the latter, and it was fast and easy to install and configure. I burned a CD, booted an old PC with it, answered a couple of questions about what type of incoming line I had (PPPoE, DHCP or static IP?) and turned it loose. Twenty minutes later it was up and running, protecting my household network!

If you just want to use an old PC as a firewall, you'll

need a PC with two Network Interface Cards (they don't have to be PCI, but it's easier if they are). The firewall will run nicely on a Pentium 100 with 32 Megabytes of RAM and 500 Megabytes of disk space.

If you want to run a workstation, with a high resolution screen with deep color depth, it takes more CPU power to move those windows around on the screen. Still for good performance Linux doesn't require as much horsepower as WindowsXP (for example). Good results can be had with a 600 Mhz PC, 128 Megs of RAM, and 3-4 Gigabytes of disk space (a bit more if you go crazy and click on "load everything").

You can load Linux alongside of Windows on your hard disk, and dual-boot into the OS you want to use.

If want to experiment with OpenSource software in the comfort of your Windows computer, you can: OpenOffice is available for Win32 as well as Linux <http://www.openoffice.org/>. GIMP, the Photoshop replacement has been ported to Windows. <http://www.wingimp.org/>, and GAIM, the GNU Instant Message program that's compatible with AIM, is found at <http://gaim.sourceforge.net/>. It's improved so much recently that many people prefer it over AIM. It's also multi-lingual, speaking AIM, ICQ, MSN, and several other instant messaging protocols.

And if you burn CD's with these programs, feel free to share them with your friends; they're under the GPL (General Public License), and can be legally copied.

If you start working with Linux and need help, there are many LUGs (Linux Users Groups) around the Southland. Their members are happy to give you a hand. You can find your local LUG at <http://www.ssc.com:8080/glue/groups/>.

Additionally, the Southern California Linux Exposition, a non-profit, community organization, holds SCALE (the SoCAL Linux Expo) every year. SCALE is a show where commercial Linux vendors, Linux enthusiasts, and academia demonstrate the many facets and features of Linux to the public. The first SCALE was held last November, and was a raging success. So much so that the 600 attendees overflowed USC's Davidson Conference Center. Pictures and an article about SCALE are here: <http://socallinuxexpo.com/past/2002/pictures/index.php>.

SCALE2X will be November 22nd, at the Los Angeles Convention Center. For up to the minute information, including complete lists of speakers and their bios, and sponsor info, check <http://www.socallinuxexpo.com/>. <http://www.socallinuxexpo.com/> <http://www.socallinuxexpo.com/> Try out Linux. But be warned - it's seductive in its power and utility!