

'Melissa' virus attacks e-mail address books

Users can avoid infection by not opening files that come with suspect e-mail

By Victor Runyan
Oregon Daily Emerald

10010111. Every day trillions of numbers like this swirl around us, running the computers that have become an integral part of most of our lives. Most of these numbers are used for good but some are typed with sinister purposes in mind.

Last Friday, computer users began encountering one of the newest viruses to hit the world of computers, the "Melissa" virus, according to an advisory by the CERT Coordination Center, a computer security consulting group.

Melissa infects machines that use Microsoft Word 97 or Word 2000. It arrives in the form of an e-mail with a subject line reading something like, "Important message from ...", with a Word file attached to it.

If Melissa infects a computer, it will probably be from someone the computer's owner knows, because the virus sends itself to the first 50 names in the owner's e-mail address book.

If the owner opens the Word file manually or if the e-mail program is set to automatically open attachments, and if "macros" are enabled in Word, the virus is activated. Macros are miniature programs that a user can create to perform tasks.

The virus sends itself to the first 50 people in the user's e-mail address book and infects the template that Word uses to make most new files. If a person creates a new file in Word, it will automatically be infected. If the user then sends one of these infected files to someone else, it will also be sent to the first 50 people on the user's address book, potentially releasing any confidential information in the Word file.

The virus is written in Visual Basic, a programming language used by Microsoft in several of its products for macros.

This virus is a member of a new type of viruses that exploit the powerful macro feature, said Spencer Smith, a computer support supervisor for the University's Microcomputer Services, a division of the Computing Center.

Macros are versatile tools, and the power of this feature is what makes it so useful and what makes viruses using it so dangerous, Smith said. Visual Basic gives the viruses one of the things that is vi-

tal for them, executable code.

"It is a two-edged sword," Smith said. "Most viruses require some executable code. At some level they need to be told to run."

Macro viruses don't have the same access to the computer infrastructure that traditional viruses do. Macros operate inside other programs with clearly defined restrictions and are able to exploit loopholes and tie-ins that permit them to reach the operating system and other programs.

Computer viruses have been created by "computer programmers who needed a hobby," Smith said. He said viruses are programs that don't serve any productive purpose. They may do nothing, or may play a prank or possibly be destructive.

There are several actions that can be taken to help protect computers from viruses. Smith suggested installing and using a virus checker.

The University offers Symantec's Norton Antivirus free on the DuckWare CD available to University students, staff and faculty.

An antivirus program should be updated frequently with the newest virus information files from the program's maker via the Internet, Smith said. He also said to scan all hard disks regularly, scan all floppy disks and downloaded files before using them and configure the antivirus program to scan regularly and automatically. Additionally, Smith recommends only downloading files from reputable sources.

A user can take several additional steps to protect his or her computer from macro viruses.

Smith said people should configure their e-mail reader to not automatically open attachments. To disable macros in the Options menu in Word and any other program that uses them is a safe option. But another way to increase safety while continuing to use macros is to then set the program to prompt for permission before allowing macros to run in a file.

Smith also said to only run files received from a friend who has contacted you and told you to expect them. Even then, all files should be downloaded and checked for viruses.

If people do find a virus, they should use a virus checker to remove it, Smith said. Then they should call Microcomputer Services at 346-4412 and tell them about the virus infection. Smith said that Microcomputer Services tries to trace infections around campus to better fight them.



(Reported from March 23 to March 29)

■ **March 23**, Theft I, 1600 block of Columbia Street, Vivian Olum Child Development Center: items stolen.

■ **March 24**, Theft II, 1200 block of Franklin Boulevard, Yamada Language Center: items stolen.

■ **March 29**, Shoplifting I, 800 block of East 13th Avenue, University Bookstore: items stolen.

■ **March 29**, Menacing, East 10th Avenue and Oak Street.

■ **March 29**, Driving While Under the Influence of Intoxicants, 1500 block of Patterson Street.

■ **March 29**, Driving While Under the Influence of Intoxicants, East 14th Avenue and Hilyard Street.

■ **March 29**, Driving While Under the Influence of Intoxicants, 11th Avenue and Hilyard Street.

Today's Events

Wednesday, March 31

■ Hillel will sponsor a Passover Seder religious service and meal from 7 to 11:45 p.m. in the Gerlinger Lounge.

■ An event to commemorate the 10-year anniversary of the Exxon Valdez

oil spill will be held from 11a.m. to 2 p.m. at the EMU Amphitheater. The event is sponsored by the Committee to Re-establish OSPERG.

Information will be given on the long-term effects of the spill. Students can send comments to Exxon from the event.

Cake will also be available.

Paints, Pens & Paper

Photography

Glassworks

Fibers Arts

Sculpture

Ceramics

Photography

Woodworking

Jewelry & Metals

Bicycle Maintenance

CRAFT CENTER

WORKSHOPS

The EMU Craft Center is a comprehensive Art Program offering well equipped facilities and workshops in many area of Visual arts. We are located in the ERB Memorial Union at the University of Oregon.

Glasswork

Flint Knapping

Tues, April 13-May 4 6:30-9:00pm
\$32 w/term pass \$36 w/out term pass

Fiber Arts

Beginning Weaving

Wed, April 14-May 19 6:30-9:00pm
\$45 Term pass required

Spinning

Sun, April 18-May 9 1:00-3:30pm
\$32 Term pass required

Coil Baskets

Sat, May 8 & 15 10:30-1:00pm
\$26 w/term pass \$30 w/out term pass

Fleece Vests

Mon, April 26-May 17 6:30-9:00pm
\$25 w/term pass \$29 w/out term pass

Springtime Baskets

Sun, May 16 & 23 1:00-4:00pm
\$28 w/term pass \$32 w/out term pass

Speed Quilting

Tues, April 6-May 18 6:30-9:00pm
\$38 Term pass required

Mapuche Weaving

Mon, April 19-May 24 6:30-9:00pm
\$48 w/term pass \$52 w/out term pass

Basic Sewing Skills

Sun, April 18-May 23 5:00-8:00pm
\$40 w/term pass \$44 w/out term pass

Beginning Knitting

Mon, May 3-24 6:30-9:00pm
\$40 w/term pass \$44 w/out term pass

Shibori

Sun, May 16 & 23 12:30-4:30pm
\$26 w/term pass \$30 w/out term pass

Wood Working

Finger Jointed Box

Wed, March 31 6:00-10:00pm
\$20 Term pass required

Wooden Hand Planes

Sat, April 17-May 1 1:00-3:00pm
\$28 Term pass required

Light Table Making

Sat, April 3 10:00am-4:30pm
Sat, April 10 10:00am-1:00pm
\$48 Term pass required

Sculpture

Wood Carving

Wed, April 14-May 19 6:00-9:00pm
\$45 Term pass required

Figure Modeling

Tues, April 13-May 25 6:30-9:00pm
\$60 w/term pass \$65 w/out term pass

Jewelry & Metals

Silver Pouring & Forming

Tue, April 27 6:30-9:30pm
\$20 w/term pass \$24 w/out term pass

Fimo Clay Jewelry

Sun, May 16 & 23 1:00-4:00pm
\$26 w/term pass \$30 w/out term pass

Beginning Jewelry

Wed, April 14-May 26 6:30-9:30pm
\$50 Term pass required

Enameling

Tues, April 13-May 25 3:00-6:00pm
\$50 Term pass required
Sun, May 9-23 1:00-4:00pm
\$32 Term pass required

Bicycle Maintenance

Whole Bike Health

Tues, April 13-May 18 6:30-9:00pm
\$40 w/term pass \$44 w/out term pass
Wed, April 14-May 19 6:30-9:00pm
\$40 w/term pass \$44 w/out term pass

Ceramics

Raku Firing

Sat, May 8 11:00am-6:00pm
\$25 Term pass required

Adv. Ceramic Sculpture

Mon-Wed, May 24-26 6:30-9:30pm
\$30 Term pass required

Beginning Ceramics

Tues, April 6-May 11 9:00-12:00pm
\$48 Term pass required

Handbuilding

Tues, April 6-May 11 3:00-6:00pm
\$48 Term pass required

Cont. Wheel Throwing

Wed, April 7-May 12 6:30-9:30pm
\$45 Term pass required

Cont. Wheel Throwing

Wed, April 7-May 12 3:00-6:00pm
\$48 Term pass required

Paints, Pens & Paper

Oil Pastels

Mon, April 19-May 24 6:30-9:00pm
\$45 w/term pass \$49 w/out term pass

Silkscreen

Mon, April 12-May 17 6:30-9:30pm
\$50 Term pass required

Drawing

Tue, April 6-May 11 6:00-8:30pm
\$38 w/term pass \$42 w/out term pass

Advanced Drawing

Thurs, April 15-May 20 6:00-8:30pm
\$38 w/term pass \$42 w/out term pass

Papermaking

Sat, April 17-May 1 10:30am-12:30pm
\$22 w/term pass \$26 w/out term pass

Photography

Photo Refresher

Wed, April 7 & 14 6:00-9:00pm
\$20 Term pass required

Wed, April 21 & 28 6:00-9:00pm
\$20 Term pass required

Handcoloring B&W Photographs

Wed, May 5 & 12 6:00-9:00pm
\$21 w/term pass \$25 w/out term pass

Polaroid Image & Emulsion Transfer

Sun, May 16 & 23 1:00-4:00pm
\$46 w/term pass \$50 w/out term pass

Spring Specials

Ceramic Clockfaces

Sun, May 16 & 23 5:00-8:00pm
\$25 w/term pass \$29 w/out term pass

Ukrainian Eggs

Wed, May 26 6:00-9:00pm
\$22 w/term pass \$26 w/out term pass

Fireside Footstools

Sun, May 16 & 23 12:30-4:30pm
\$22 w/term pass \$26 w/out term pass

\$5 Specials

Origami

Tues, March 30 6:30-9:30pm

Ceramic Whistles

Tues, March 30 6:30-9:30pm

35mm Camera Use

Wed, March 31 6:00-9:00pm

Beaded Bracelets

Thurs, April 1 6:30-9:30pm

Tie Dyeing

Thurs, April 1 2:00-5:00pm

Papermaking

Tues, March 30 2:00-4:30pm

Bike Doctor

Tues, March 30 6:30-9:30pm

Mugs & Bowls

Tues, March 30 3:00-6:00pm

Wed, March 31 3:00-6:00pm
NO TERM PASS REQUIRED FOR THE \$5 SPECIALS

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