

## Three Minute Tech Tip - # 20 May 18, 2005

Have you been plagued by an over abundance of e-mails from strangers and even acquaintances who claim that they didn't send you any e-mail? Have you received a barrage of e-mails in German? A variation of the W32.Sober computer worm is to blame.

### **TODAY'S TECH TIP: Dealing with Computer Worm Messages**

A computer worm is an independent self-replicating computer program, similar to a computer virus. Worms are spread to unprotected PC computers via network connections or e-mails, often clogging networks and information systems as they spread.

Most recently, a new variation of the W32.Sober worm has emerged that has clogged e-mail systems. It has been sending German language messages to scores of e-mail users. This worm, although a big nuisance, is relatively harmless. Sober-Q is a new variant of an existing worm program and is a relatively new type of "propaganda spam," meant to spread political messages.

Another type of worm has users of AOL's Instant Messaging software (AIM), on the lookout. It is an innovative new worm that hijacks the list of contacts or "buddies" in an infected user's IM account. When a user opens the message "Hey check this out," and then clicks on an embedded link that user becomes infected with the worm.

Here are some important facts about viruses and worms.

1. Good anti-virus software protects your computer, AS LONG AS IT IS KEPT UPDATED. Make sure your software is set to automatically update itself. Renew your software's subscription when it expires, or you will not be protected against new viruses and worms.
2. You can get lots of annoying e-mail even though your computer is fully protected. There is little you can do about these virus or worm generated e-mails, except to delete them without opening.
3. The person whose From: address appears on the annoying e-mail is probably not the real sender, and is probably not infected. "Spoofing" is when a virus or worm generated message pretends to come from someone else.

Most viruses and worms arrive on your PC in the form of e-mail attachments. Even with good antivirus software installed, a good rule of thumb is never to open e-mail attachments unless you absolutely trust the sender (e.g., it's someone you know AND they are sending an attachment you've been expecting). If a worm tries to infect your protected system, the software will intercept and delete it. Without protection, however, your computer becomes a carrier and starts distributing the worm silently and without your knowledge.

Here are links to removing the W32.Sober virus from your computer:

<http://securityresponse.symantec.com/avcenter/venc/data/w32.sober.removal.tool.html>  
<http://ts.mcafeehelp.com/?siteID=1&resolution=&cid=13048>

Special thanks to Jayne Bear for her assistance with today's topic

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Time's up! Gotta go. Have suggestions for other Tech Tips? E-mail me.

As always, feel free to contact Troy at the regional helpdesk with any tech support question at [help@remax-nj.net](mailto:help@remax-nj.net) or (888) 54-REMAX.