

Press Release

Windows Users Need Critical Patch

New Vulnerability Bypasses All Antivirus Software to Infect Computers

Lincoln, NE – August 10, 2006:

Microsoft and the Department of Homeland Security released a statement urging users of Microsoft's Windows XP Operating System to immediately install a patch to avoid virus threats that can easily bypass all standard anti-virus and firewall programs.

In a rare alert, the U.S. Department of Homeland Security has urged Windows users to plug a potential worm hole in the Microsoft operating system. The agency, which also runs the United States Computer Emergency Readiness Team (US-CERT), sent out a news release on Wednesday recommending that people apply Microsoft's MS06-040 patch as soon as possible. The software maker released the critical patch on Tuesday in a batch of 12 total patches.

"Users are encouraged to avoid delay in applying this security patch," the Department of Homeland Security said in the statement. The patch fixes a serious flaw that, if exploited, could enable an attacker to remotely take complete control of an affected system, the agency said.

Thor Schrock, a local computer security expert and owner of Schrock Innovations, Inc., said that in 2003 there were warnings urging people to install a patch to stop the MSBlast worm in the newspapers, on the national news and across the Internet, yet many people inaccurately relied on their antivirus programs to protect their computers.

"This is a new vulnerability that was not known before yesterday, Schrock said. "At the present time, there are no anti-virus programs that have the ability to protect your computer from this threat. The only way you can protect yourself is to install the patch from the Windows Update website."

The flaw is very similar to the Windows bug that enabled the notorious MSBlast worm to spread in 2003. Both security vulnerabilities are related to a Windows component called "remote procedure call," which provides support for networking features such as file sharing and printer sharing.

Microsoft has reported a "very limited attack" that already used the newly disclosed flaw, the software maker said Tuesday.

“The exploit is already being used to attack very specific systems on a limited basis, Schrock said. However, it could only be a matter of hours before someone modifies the old MSBlast virus to exploit this new vulnerability.”

Microsoft deems the vulnerability critical for all versions of Windows. However, users of Windows XP with Service Pack 2 and Windows Server 2003 with Service Pack 1 should be protected by the Windows Firewall if they do not use file sharing and printer sharing, Christopher Budd, a security program manager at Microsoft, said in an interview Tuesday.

You can obtain the official Microsoft patch and additional information on protecting your computer from this threat at <http://www.schrockinnovations.com/viruscenter>.

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