BOBAX WORM AND SIMILAR NEW THREATS

The Bobax worm is the latest threat spreading across the internet. It won't get as far, because millions more users have downloaded the latest Windows security update. I detailed how to do that in a previous column.

On the other hand its more dangerous and will cause more severe damage to your software.

For a lucid rundown and effective instructions on how to deal with the worm and disinfect your computer, read P.C Magazine's article on it at http://www.pcmag.com/article2/0,1759,1599409,00.asp . What's interesting is as of this writing two companies are offering removal tools, but not Symantec, the manufacturer of Norton. P.C Magazine tells you where to get them.

However, Symantec has released three removal tools since the Sasser worm removal tool. I suggest you go to their site - http://www.symantec.com - and click the removal tool link. You'll see this page:

Note where the cursor is in the bottom left hand corner. Clicking it brings up the following page.

I downloaded all three and ran them. I wasn't infected because I had long ago installed Microsoft's security patch. Better safe the sorry.

This will be the last threat I discuss caused by the Windows XP, 2000, or Windows Server 2003 security hole. If by now you haven't enabled automatic windows updates, you aren't taking your security seriously.

My column is short this week. There's a lot of work for you if you follow the links, download the removal tools and use them.

In the past two weeks I've decided to up the pace, due to the emails I've been getting directly and others forwarded by Jack.

These involve three general topics. One is anonymous surfing. There are sites on the net that claim you can surf through them and hide your real identity. There are always holes. And the sites themselves may include Spyware. I'm looking into several alternatives now.

Another is 'spoofing'. This is sending email pretending to be someone else. It's not perfect. It leaves tracks. Some of the emails want to know more about how to do it. I'm a bit reluctant to indulge this desire. I will address the issue. I'm putting inquiries into forums and will test a few alternatives.

Third is the vulnerability of email. In theory every email you send or receive can be intercepted. What can you do to encrypt really sensitive email? If the NSA is after you, not much. If the local

cops, bills collectors or personal enemies want to sniff you out, you can make it difficult. One advantage is the sheer number of emails and transfer points along the path from sender to receiver. It's a lot of work to sort through them. Internet 'backbones' will notice. One help is to use the security features I've been advocating from the beginning. There are more and better ways for the really sensitive emails you want to send. I'll discuss some of these in the coming weeks. Research takes time.

I want to thank Joel Wade for the benefit I've received from some of this advice. Surprisingly, a close friend on the other end of the religious divide, an ultra-orthodox woman named Leah has used similar techniques to improve my life. She's a member of a far out sect called *Chabadnikim* (in Hebrew).

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