

FORGERIES and VIRUSES and WORMS, OH MY!

--> Recently, Internet users have been flooded with email messages urging them to open "attachments" under various false pretenses -- your credit card has been stolen, your mail account is expiring, some free music or photos are attached, or you must fill out a form to update your account. These emails come from official-sounding addresses such as "Mail Administrator" or the Security Department of your bank. In almost every case, however, the "From" headers are forged and the message contains a virus; opening the attachment will instantly infect your computer. **DO NOT OPEN THESE ATTACHMENTS!**

--> **Forged mail headers** are the latest wrinkle in the growing problem of email abuse on the Internet. It's important for you to understand that an email claiming to be from your bank doesn't necessarily mean that your bank sent the message. Anyone can forge a "From" header by changing a few settings in their mail program! If you have doubts about the validity of an email you receive, contact the sender's Customer Service Department; or better yet, pick up the phone and call the sender. It is always better to be safe than sorry!

--> **Virus writers like to prey upon people's emotions.** Use care when opening any e-mail greeting. Be especially wary of the attachment that may look like this: LOVE-LETTER-FOR-YOU.txt.vbs. It will spread a virus to everyone in a computer's Outlook address list. Ditto for the attachments WIN.SCR or I Love You !!!.SCR. There are even more new problems to watch out for online.

--> **NETSKY.B IS RAPIDLY MAKING THE ROUNDS** According to experts, the Netsky.B worm (also known as MooDown) has spread rapidly, infecting many computers. The worm hunts down e-mail addresses on the hard drive and sends itself to them. The full threat of this worm is not clear. It removes the MyDoom virus if it is present. It also makes changes to the Registry. You can avoid the whole thing by keeping your anti-virus software updated.

--> **THE BAGLE WORM IS BACK TOO.** Bagle.B is infesting computers. This is believed to be a back-door program, perhaps to spread spam from victims' machines. Such programs can also be used to steal personal information off a computer and send it out via the Internet. I know I sound like a broken record. But if you will install anti-virus software and keep it updated, you won't have problems.

--> **THEFT OF WINDOWS CODE POSES THREAT.** By now most of you are aware that code from Windows NT and 2000 was stolen. It has since circulated on the Internet, where anyone can look at it. Reportedly, a security flaw has already been found. But it affects Internet Explorer 4 and 5. If you are still using these obsolete versions, go to the Microsoft site and update your system. That will bring IE up to version 6. When you install Service Pack 1, the flaw will be patched. Experts disagree on how serious the disclosure of Windows code is. At the least, it could give the bad guys insight into how Windows is written. Windows XP was derived from NT and 2000. So, protect yourself. It is imperative that you keep Windows updated. To do that, go to the Web. In Internet Explorer, click Tools>> Windows Update. Let Microsoft scan your system. Install all security fixes.

BUT HELP IS ON THE WAY!

SECURE COMPUTING: Stuff to keep you safe from harm!



--> **GET A FREE UPDATE CD FROM MICROSOFT** Some of Microsoft's updates are big, big, big. Downloading over a dial-up connection is a chore. To avoid that, you can get all the updates through October on CD for free. Once these updates are installed, you'll have more to do. There have been many updates since October. They still will have to be downloaded. Meanwhile, order the free CD here:

<<http://www.microsoft.com/security/protect/cd/order.asp>>