



News You Can Use

NEWS

REPORTS OF OSX VIRUS

You may hear reports of a virus that affects MacOS X. I feel the threat is being overstated.

For the virus (really a Trojan Horse) to cause problems, you have to take several steps to enable its action.

- Download a specific file
- Double-click to expand the file
- Double-click to run the file
- Enter your administrator password

So this isn't the usual "automatic infection" virus or Trojan like people see on Windows systems.

We may see a security update or tech note from Apple about this.

In the meanwhile, don't panic, and don't rush to install antivirus software.

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QUICK TIP

AVOID MINI CDS

Don't try to insert a mini CD into a slot-loading drive. It will not work, and it won't eject either!

Brave New World _____ **all**

The New Intel Macs

Well, they're out, but I haven't yet seen one. Apple has switched from the PowerPC chip (e.g. the G5) to the Intel chip. Here are some things we already know:

- The 17" iMac G5 appears to have been discontinued; the Apple Store web site doesn't show 'em any more. The 20" iMac G5 price dropped from \$1699 to \$1499, probably to move them out;
- The Intel-based "Dual Core" iMacs are virtually identical to the older G5 models with the exception of the CPU chip;
- The MacBook Pro laptop is also now shipping.

Compatibility

Apple has done considerable work to ensure that older PowerPC programs—the ones that run on the G3-4-5—will run on the Intel Macs.

PowerPC Programs

Apple has included *Rosetta*, a software technology that allows programs written for the PowerPC to run on the Intel chip. Initial reports show that Rosetta works well, but not for everything. I'll be keeping an eye on web sites and magazine articles; they'll produce a list of the good, the bad, and the ugly applications on Rosetta.

Apple had the Rosetta technology several years ago; I remember a version of it while I was still working there. At the time, it was being used for either Sun Microsystems or Silicon Graphics chips, and it was working back then. So I expect it to be easy for Apple to polish it as necessary.

Universal Applications

There's a new class of programs, labeled *Universal*, which indicates they'll run on either the G3-4-5 or the Intel CPUs. Unfortunately, some of the big software companies aren't yet ready with their Universal versions.

No More Classic

This one's important to note. With the transition to the Intel chip, Apple is dropping Classic support for MacOS 9 programs. If you buy an Intel-based Mac, you'll have to plan to upgrade older programs to their MacOS X version: Universal versions are

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THE FINE PRINT**THE PRICE LIST**

Standard Rate is \$52/hr.

Apple Remote Desktop help is billed at the reduced rate of \$35/hr.

Phone support is free, except if the call runs to a half hour. Then it's billed at the further-reduced rate of \$30/hr.

Email support is always free. Ask your questions and you'll get an answer, usually within a few hours.

Invoices are mailed on the first of each month, covering charges incurred during the prior month. (So, for example, you'll be billed on May 1st for work done in April.)

New Clients receive a one-time half hour discount !

WHAT'S IMPORTANT

Solving your problem the *right* way, as much as humanly possible.

Not making things worse.

Some support folks try to fix one problem and end up creating new ones. Where does that leave you?

Keeping your costs down. It's more important to provide good service than to squeeze out a few more bucks. When you see a "comp" item on an invoice, it's my way of helping to keep your costs low.

preferred, of course, but PowerPC versions should work with Rosetta.

Several Ways Spammers Get Your Email Address _____ all

How Does Spam Find Me?

Whenever we get a flurry of spam in our email inboxes, the first question is "How did they get my address?" Some spammers use a program to create addresses, e.g. joea@charter.net, joeb@charter.net, bill@charter.net, and so forth. But those with unusual addresses—ones that defy such automatic generation—still get spam.

Spammers "harvest" email addresses from the legal places where your email address might be used. These harvested addresses are actually *better* for them than generated ones, because they originally came from real people.

Examples of harvesting locations:

- **Web pages offering free service.** These might be web-based email access services, electronic greeting card sites, forums, chat rooms, message boards and the like. These sites usually have to make money somehow; perhaps they sell the addresses of those who register or use their service.
- **Usenet newsgroups.** Spammers scan messages posted to these groups.
- **Online directories.** These include school registries, hobby interest sites, genealogy registries, even some so-called professional registries.
- **Your own web page.** If you maintain a web presence, your contact information will be grabbed for use by spammers.
- **Friends.** Yes, your friends can be a source of spam. They might sign you up for something, not realizing you'll now get spam. And consider the well-meaning electronic greeting card: will that site harvest *both* the sender's and the recipient's email addresses?
- **Viruses and spyware.** Our friends with Windows computers may have their address books hijacked by hackers. All the saved addresses will no doubt get sold to spammers.

Can You Prevent Harvesting?**Use a Throwing Address**

Some folks suggest keeping a "throwaway" email address that forwards to your real one. But this may only be possible if your ISP allows this email "alias" to be set up. When the throwaway address becomes a spam target, you switch it.

This solution isn't really that good: for it to work, you need to have all your *personal email* correspondents use the throwaway

address. So changing that address is just as much of a pain as changing your main address.

Be Careful Where You Sign Up

This makes a lot of sense. Before you register at a web site, think about who they are. Do they publish a privacy policy? Do they publish contact information, so that you can complain if necessary? (An email address is hardly reasonable. Reputable companies will give their phone number and USMail address.) Do they say what they'll do with your information?

Don't Try Opting Out Of Spam

There are mixed opinions about this, but my feeling is that you should never reply to spam, even to "opt out" of their future mailings.

Most spam comes from forged email addresses, so replying will simply waste your time. Worse, some spammers will now know that you're really there!

Check Options When You Order

When you order from many online retailers, there are settings you can choose before you submit your order. Typically, there will be a checkbox for something like "Advise me of future specials and news..." You'd want to turn this off if you don't want to get future emails from them.

If you later receive mailings from them, go ahead and unsubscribe or opt out of their mailings. They aren't spammers; they're just exploiting email as a sales tool.

Can You Limit The Annoyance?

There are a few steps you can take to limit what you see. These steps don't reduce the amount of spam you actually have to *download* when you fetch email, but at least you don't have to *look* at them.

Automatic Spam Recognition

By using an email program with a good automatic spam filter, like Apple's Mail program on MacOS X, you can cut some of the annoyance of spam.

Your computer must still waste time downloading these messages, but at least you won't have to see them.

For those on MacOS 9 and earlier systems, there isn't much choice of email programs: most are too old to have effective spam recognition.

How Many Ways Can You Spell Viagra?

If you've tried manual filters—rules that match message words—you've found that this just doesn't work. Spammers constantly change their spellings of key words to beat the filters.

Automatic filters, however, scan *all* the words in the message, making a decision based on the overall appearance of the message contents.

Turn Off Images

Many email programs have a setting for “Download images in messages” or something like that. By turning this *off*, you can prevent the appearance of all the images that come with spam. This not only saves online time, but it can limit the annoying appearance of those messages.