



Tech Info Library

Computer Viruses (part 4 of 4)

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Security: Everyone

Computer "Viruses" (part 4 of 4)

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SAFEGUARDING YOUR SYSTEMS

What Makes Our System Susceptible to Viruses

The various mechanisms described in part 2 of this article make our system easy to infiltrate by a virus. Remember that it is those same mechanisms that add to the flexibility and "look and feel" of the Macintosh. For instance, the INIT mechanism is used by mail systems to load their code in. AppleShare uses the INIT mechanism to mount network volumes at boot time.

Why Vaccine Works in This Case, But Is Easy to Bypass

Vaccine, a public domain INIT written to block viruses, does a good job of alerting you when the three known viruses are trying to infect your system. The problem with Vaccine: once a cure is found for one set of viruses, a new strain may appear that knows how to bypass the existing defenses.

Some Suggestions

- Lock your master diskettes

Always keep original "Master" disks locked. This prevents a virus from spreading to your original disks. Our disk locking mechanism is hardware based -- viruses can't infect locked disks!

- Protect your networks

Network administrators should not allow just anyone to put software on the server. Applications on a network server should come only from known good masters.

- Be wary of public domain software

Public domain software should be checked quite thoroughly on a floppy-based system for any infections before being copied to a hard disk based system. This will also protect you from any "Trojan Horse" programs such as "Sexy Ladies."

- Quarantine infected systems

If you identify a system as being infected with a virus, immediately isolate (quarantine) it from other systems. This means disconnecting it from any network and not allowing anyone to take any files from the exposed system to another system. Once the system has been 'disinfected,' you can allow the files to be copied or moved.

- Use ResEdit

ResEdit is a good tool to look for viruses on your disks. There is very little that can be hidden from ResEdit, so you can use it to remove troublemaking files and resources.

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