Virus explanation

Article URL
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Published: 28 August 2006

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Boot viruses

A MS-DOS virus that infects the boot record program on hard disks and floppy disks or the master boot record on hard disks. The virus gets loaded into memory before MS-DOS and takes control of the computer, infecting any floppy disks subsequently accessed. An infected boot disk may stop the computer starting up at all.

Windows viruses

Viruses are mostly only written for 1 platform (OS). If you have a virus that is written for linux and you work with windows 98, you don't have to fear, nothing will happen.
Because windows is the most used platform in the world, you'll understand that most viruses are written for windows.

Macro viruses

Macro viruses are a significant problem on the Internet with now well over 1000 different types and variants. This problem is caused by the ease with which a macro virus can be written and the speed with which infected documents can be spread.
These viruses can work on any platform that can run Microsoft Word 6.0 or later: Windows 3.1, WFW 3.11, Windows 95, Windows NT, and Macintosh.
The damage: Files can be modified or deleted and may not be recoverable.

Worms

Worm (computer virus), in computer science, a program that propagates itself across computers, usually by spawning copies of itself in each computer's memory. A worm might duplicate itself in one computer so often

that it causes the computer to crash. Sometimes written in separate "segments," a worm is introduced surreptitiously into a host system either for "fun" or with intent to damage or destroy information. The term comes from a science-fiction novel and has generally been superseded by the term virus. See also Trojan Horse.

Trojan Horse

Trojans and backdoors, these programs usually put a little server on your computer. So other can access your files and sometimes completely take over your computer.
For the most common trojans check out this page.

Hoax

Hoax are fake ! These are messages, emails that are send around. Usually they warn you about some non-existing virus.
Some are harmless, but other are dangerous. Sometimes they say you should delete a certain file, this file is then essential to windows. There are more examples. Some say the only way to protect you from "the virus" is to download a update. This "update" is then a real virus!