



Newsletter

April 2005

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Incident Update

- Wed Apr 13 15:17:03 2005 CA: [Mytob Family](#) Medium
- Mon Apr 18 09:46:52 2005 CA: [Win32.Mytob.X](#) Medium
- Tue Apr 19 16:46:58 2005 FSC: [Sober.N reported in-the-wild](#) 2
- Tue Apr 19 16:46:58 2005 CA: [Win32.Sober.M](#) Medium
- Tue Apr 19 16:46:58 2005 CA: [Sober.M](#) Medium
- Fri Apr 29 10:02:11 2005 CA: [Mydoom.BL](#) Medium

Hong Kong's Fifth Annual Information Security Survey Released

HKCERT, the Technology Crime Division of the Hong Kong Police and the Office of the Government Chief Information Officer have released their fifth annual information security survey. They conclude that information security in Hong Kong has improved, with more companies adopting advanced security measures. However, many companies, especially SME's are reactive, and companies should continue to improve not just the security measures they use, but also their security management.

Full Report:

http://www.hkcert.org/articles/sec2004_report.pdf

Patrick Lee's seminar to HKPMA

On 1st April 2005, our Solution Engineer, Patrick Lee conducted a seminar on "How To Effectively Defend Against Computer Viruses" organised by Hong Kong Property Management Association in Wan Chai. Mr. Lee presented a comprehensive speech on basic

Anti-Virus anti-virus and information security concepts, and answered the audience's questions. The presentation slides are available on request from info@yuikee.com.hk.

Mostly Harmless

The film of the book of the TV series of the radio series "The Hitchhikers Guide to the Galaxy" has been released. The late author, Douglas Adams, always downplayed his role as a technological visionary, "I really didn't foresee the Internet. But then, neither did the computer industry. Not that that tells us very much of course - the computer industry didn't even foresee that the century was going to end."

http://www.theregister.com/2005/04/29/h2g2_review/

<http://hitchhikers.movies.go.com/>

HK Plays Galactic Domination Games

Hong Kong's Office of the Chief Information Officer (OGCIO) now allows softcopies of tenders to be submitted in a variety of formats, including ".swx file format". This can be identified as SWarsXML (.swx). SWars is a science-fiction strategy game, and .swx files are used to store game universes. Modelling a universe is a bold step in strategic thinking. Or OGCIO might be referring to the native Open Office format.

More information:

<http://web.vee.net/projects/swars/editor.html>

<http://web.vee.net/projects/swars/>

<http://www-128.ibm.com/developerworks/xml/library/x-think15/>

<http://www.openoffice.org/>

"Sophisticated Hardware" for <HK\$300

A failed attempt to steal £220m (approx. HK\$3bn) from the Sumitomo Mitsui Bank in the City of London, described in the press as "high-tech" and "Mission Impossible-style" centred on "sophisticated hardware devices". Although no money was lost, the Police were still chasing the gang.

The sophisticated hardware was revealed to be... a simple USB keylogger, available for just £20 (approx. HK\$280). Perhaps some of the other "Mission Impossible" hardware is just as cheap?

http://www.theregister.co.uk/2005/04/13/sumitomu_bank/

Yui Kee at the ICT Expo

This month, we joined the TDC's International ICT Expo to showcase our latest encryption, anti-virus and wireless alerting solutions. Mr. J. B. Dumerc, Vice-President of SSH Communications, came from Japan to support us.

Our Chief Consultant, Allan Dyer gave a well-attended seminar, "Information Security:

Preventing Spam with Puremessage;
Securing Your Network with SSH Tectia" at the



Patrick Lee, J B Dumerc, Allan Dyer, Karen Cheung and Kason Pun at the Yui Kee booth.

show on the 16th April. The presentation slides are available on request from info@yuikee.com.hk.

IRS Vulnerable to Social Engineering

In the USA, Treasury Department auditors called 100 IRS employees and managers pretending to be IT helpdesk staff working on a network problem. They asked the employees to provide their network logon name and temporarily change their password to one they suggested and 35 complied.

That was a 50 percent improvement when compared with a similar test in 2001, when 71 employees cooperated and changed their passwords. The IRS strengthened its staff security education attempts after the report.

More information:

<http://www.cnn.com/2005/TECH/03/17/irs.computer.security.ap/index.html>

<http://www.sfgate.com/cgi-bin/article.cgi?file=/news/archive/2005/03/16/national/w162055S07.DTL&type=printable>

http://www.schneier.com/blog/archives/2005/03/social_engineer.html

The Social Life of Virus Writers

Sarah Gordon, senior principal research engineer at Symantec Security Response, has hit out both at stereotypes that virus writers are socially inept, and at assumptions they have become hardened criminals in recent years. Gordon has studied the psychology of virus writers for more than a decade and found they varied considerably in age, education, income, interests and social skills. "Most of the adult males I've interviewed have had girlfriends. Female virus writers have had boyfriends. The stereotypes are wrong," Gordon said.

Equally, Gordon claims that only a very small percentage of viruses are created with the intention of criminal gain. Malicious code like Agobot and Bagle are intended to steal personal information or computer resources, so they get a lot of publicity. However, most "in-the-wild" viruses are created out of technical curiosity by nuisance virus writers who have no conception of the damage and inconvenience caused. "Virus writing is irresponsible but not difficult," she said.

http://www.theregister.co.uk/2005/04/15/vxers_have_gfs/

Allan Dyer Speaks at Integrated Security Conference

Our Chief Consultant, Allan Dyer, spoke on behalf of the Information Security Specialist Group of the Hong Kong Computer Society at the Integrated Security Conference & Expo, on the 21st April. His topic was Anti-Spam: Today and the Future. Dyer advocated using Legal, Social and Technical controls in combination to combat spam. He also identified the first spam as being sent in 782 B.C., by King You of the Zhou dynasty. The Kings' misuse of the messaging system led to his death, and the end of the Zhou dynasty. Dyer gave his criteria for acceptable messaging, and argued that political parties and charities should not be given an exemption to the rules: freedom of speech does not equal freedom from responsibility. There is also a responsibility for everyone, including home users, to keep their machines free of the unauthorised backdoors and open relays that spammers often utilise.

Spam was a hot topic for the conference, with a number of the other speakers also focussing on it, including the Opening Keynote speaker, Howard Dickson, the Government Chief Information Officer.

Kids want Information Security Education before 10

A panel of teenagers speaking at the Computers, Freedom and Privacy Conference gave advice on educating youngsters about Information Security. Elizabeth, a sixteen-year-old at Seattle Preparatory School emphasised safety, "I don't know that a school should be giving courses in computer ethics, but they should talk about computer security. If you are going to have a computer in the classroom, talk to kids about - hey, you might see an adult site, that there are internet predators out there, they exist, you kids need to be careful - you know, give them the basic education."

Steven, a 16-year-old junior at Sammanish High School wanted a similar treatment to sex education, "We need to have the same sort of discussion in terms of privacy. The majority of teenagers know about the sexual diseases out there because of this conversation that they have with their parents or because of they have the talk in the school in sex ed. I think (security) needs to be addressed the same as well."

Elizabeth also commented that kids are ahead of parents and educators in Information Security terms, "It feels like we are done and on to the next thing by the time other people are aware of it." All the panellists agree that parents and schools should be talking about the internet with their kids far sooner than they do today - by the age of 10 at the latest

More information:

http://www.theregister.com/2005/04/19/teenagers_want_computer_security_lessons/

Related:

http://www.hkcs.org.hk/hkicc/hkicc98/info/speaker_aak.html



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