

Will Melissa Ever Die?

By Cindy Bridges
Editor

Be careful. Melissa is out there and she's coming to get you. That is, W97M.Mailissa, a computer macro virus that is propagating quickly and has the potential to infect millions of computers. Her alias is "Melissa." Be on the lookout for her. She comes to you via your e-mail.

Friday, March 26, was Melissa's conception, and by Monday, thousands of computers around the country were infected with the virus. Companies such as DuPont, Lockheed Martin, and Microsoft were also affected by Melissa.

This virus can only affect people who utilize Microsoft's popular Word 97 or Word 2000 with Outlook 97, 98, or 2000.

The W97 Mailissa virus usually manifests itself in the form of an e-mail containing an infected Word document as an

attachment. The e-mail message has been reported to contain the following subject header: "Subject: Important message from <name>." The name is the full name of the user sending the message. Therefore, it may look like it is a message from a friend, relative, or coworker. The body of the message says: "Here is that document you asked for... don't show it to anyone else ;-)." Apparently, this virus has the capability to break into the e-mail address book of a computer. It then transmits the infected message to the first 50 people on a computer user's e-mail list. The message can include the contents of any Word file that is open on the user's computer. Once a person opens e-mail that has been infected by the virus, that user has just sent the virus to 50 people from his or her e-mail list.

Melissa likes to propagate and she does it quickly, pretending to be someone you

know. She is deceiving and cunning and she is growing every day. She has the capability to cause any mail handling system to experience performance problems, but she does not cause any permanent damage to a computer's memory or programs.

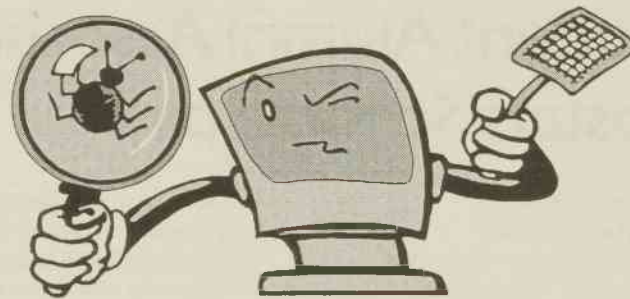
Melissa is mutating every day. New viruses similar to her are popping up. The "Papa" virus showed itself on March 30, four days after Melissa's arrival. This virus is similar to Melissa but instead of a Word document attachment to an e-mail, "Papa" has a spreadsheet file attachment. And, "Papa" is more powerful in that he will propagate to 60 other e-mail addresses compared to Melissa's 50!


So, how do you protect yourself from Melissa and other viruses? First of all, you can simply not open e-mails that have at-

tachments. Several anti-virus software makers such as Norton, have posted software on their Web sites that computer users can download to detect and reject the Melissa virus. It is wise to regularly run the latest anti-virus software. This is to ensure that the macros in documents are safe. Keep your anti-virus software up to date.

The creator of the Melissa virus is still on the FBI's wanted list. If caught, he faces up to ten years jail time and a \$350,000 fine.

Melissa is out there and it looks like she is going to stay awhile. She has made herself comfortable in thousands of homes and will invade many more. If it's not her, it may be "Papa" or another mutation. Be aware. Take the necessary precautions. Keep them out of *your* home.






Edward McKay

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CRIME STOPPERS

630-PATROL

On February 10, Lynn Brewer, secretary for the science division, reported to the Methodist College Police and Public Safety Department that her desk in the Science Building had been broken into. It is believed that a cell physiology test and a developmental biology test had been copied with the copy machine that is located in the secretaries' office. Evidence of pry marks was found on the drawer of the desk, and the east side of the door to the office.

On February 14, Sean Reed, a resident student at Methodist College, reported to Police and Public Safety that he was a victim of vandalism. His car, while parked in the Pierce/West parking lot, was vandalized sometime between February 12 and 13. Mr. Reed's 1996, white Pontiac Sunbird suffered approximately \$1,500.00 worth of damage to the roof, hood, and windshield wiper. The

roof and hood both had large dents in them, while the windshield wiper was bent outward.

On February 22, Randall Chronister, a resident student at Methodist College, reported to the Police and Public Safety Department that he was a victim of vandalism. His car, while parked in the Pearce Hall parking lot, was vandalized sometime between February 20 and 22. Mr. Chronister's 1998, green Chevy S-10 suffered approximately \$800 worth of damage to the right door and right front fender. The door and fender both had scratches.

If anyone has any information regarding these incidents, please contact Methodist College Crime Stoppers at 630-PATROL. A reward is being offered to anyone who provides a tip that leads to the apprehension of the individual(s) who committed these crimes.

Battle of the Sexes

A Relationship
Discussion Group
Monday,
April 12
7:30 p.m.
Counseling Center

Tae-Bo
Sponsored By
Student Alumni
Association

Tuesdays & Thursdays,
7:30 p.m.
Saturdays
4 p.m.
Weaver Lobby