
Subject: VIRUS ALERT (was: Ghost object)
Posted by [Martin Schultz](#) on Thu, 17 Aug 2000 07:00:00 GMT
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!!!!!! ATTENTION -- VIRUS ALERT !!!!!!!

The Security Advisory Committee of the Expert Programmers Association (SACEPA) announces:

Pavel R. has recently discovered the first IDL virus, codename "ghostfont". This is an extremely dangerous beast, and it hits the IDL community completely unprepared. In the past we have always thought that viruses would be something that belongs to Microsoft Windows, and that no one would care about an IDL virus, because the user community is sparse enough to prevent serious epidemics. Yet, here it is, and the bad news is: no one (not even the EPA wizards) know how to remove it. We only know that the drastic measure typical for infected Windows systems (clean your disk and reinstall) will not be likely to succeed. What makes this virus especially dangerous is IDL's platform independence. And what worries us at SACEPA most is that this virus apparently threatens the whole idea of open source software. Because IDL programs are plain text files, it was never thought feasible for a virus to attack, yet, here it comes. Open software can only be rehabilitated if it is discovered that this is a bug in the IDL main executable (which is not open source) or a simple programmer's oversight.

Summary:

Virus name: ghostfont

Danger classification: 1* - probably mildly harmful, but risks not fully analyzed yet

Virus action: produces IDLgrfont objects even if no one asked for them and doesn't remove them upon cleanup. So far, no more serious damage has been detected, but we cannot exclude that this virus will expunge your harddisk.

Counter measures: Don't use Pavel's new program

For SACEPA signed by
Martin

PS: :-)

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- > convinced it is a one-time glitch (that sometimes repeats at regular

> Solution: I'll just quit IDL to let it rest over the lunch break :-)

> Pavel

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[[Dr. Martin Schultz Max-Planck-Institut fuer Meteorologie

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