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How Safe Is Your Mobile Phone From Viruses?

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Viruses are every computer user's worst nightmare. But is your cell phone vulnerable to an infection, too? Several recent viruses have threatened mobile devices. As the line of difference between mobile devices and computers is blurring at a fast pace, these gadgets are acquiring more and more technical capabilities and in turn, becoming less and less secure from outside threats. With increasing use of wireless technologies such as WAP and Bluetooth, growing adaptability of operating systems such as Windows CE and Symbian, and advent of embeddable programming languages like Java and .Net, mobile devices have acquired features considered unthinkable for communication gadgets and have become almost as easily programmable as computers. The power packed into the little machines is bound to make you thrilled but somewhere in the wild, the virus writers are smiling.

What could be the intentions of possible hackers of mobile phones? Well, they might use them for financial gains, for spying related activities, to choke a network on behalf of a competitor, to steal your personal information or for sheer programming pleasure. Mobile networks are not monitored for viruses like Internet servers are. This makes mobiles easy prey for virus writers.

Now a days, on account of these phones being directly attached with billing or credit systems, they make an appealing target for the virus writers. This might bring unexpected consequences for unsuspecting users. Just imagine your mobile being

infected by a virus that allows a hacker to make international calls at your cost. Calls may also be made to phone services that charge for every call they receive.

“Last year, the number of viruses and worms that affected cell phones and PDAs increased substantially. Mobile device viruses like “Cabir” and “CommWarrior.A,” could read addresses and phone numbers and spread from mobile phones and BlackBerrys through Bluetooth connections and mobile messaging services without the user’s knowledge. While these types of attacks have not become pervasive, they have the potential to infect and spread from devices consumers least expect, and target devices that probably lack security protections.” explains Sulabh Mahant, Security Analyst, MicroWorld.

“Viruses and worms cannot infect a very large numbers of wireless devices until at least 30 percent of users commonly receive e-mails with attachments. By year-end 2007, large-scale user-to-user sending of more-complex executables will be commonplace. Once smart phones account for 30 percent of all wireless telephones in use--likely no sooner than the end of 2007--rapidly spreading attacks will be much more likely” says Govind Rammurthy, CEO, MicroWorld, analyzing the new developments.

However, MicroWorld is already working on a security solution for seamless wireless communication. “We are in the process of developing an Integrated AntiVirus and firewall system to provide Real-Time protection for smart phones operating on Microsoft Windows CE and Symbian operating systems. A new technology to filter all type of emails, messages and files that come via input devices, is under development. Simultaneously, the firewall will work on a set of rules to block or permit two-way communication.” reveals Govind Rammurthy, outlining their current plans for mobile security.

With a vision to provide a comprehensive security blanket on every communication device on the planet, MicroWorld is definitely mobile on the right path.

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