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Microsoft PowerPoint shows new vulnerability

By ICTWorld, 4 October 2006

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A new vulnerability has been identified in Microsoft PowerPoint which allows Remote Code Execution on targeted computers.

Using the vulnerability, a remote attacker can execute arbitrary code on a targeted machine, by exploiting the memory corruption occurring when a smartly created PowerPoint file with the exploit code, is opened in Office 2003, Office 2000 and Office XP and also in PowerPoint 2004 for Mac OS X and PowerPoint v. X for Mac OS X.

Two exploits targeting the flaw, already in the wild, are detected as MSPPoint.Agent.k and MSPPoint.Agent. These malwares drop a backdoor named Backdoor.Ginwui, the same Trojan used in the May attack via MS word files.

Once inside the computer, the backdoor can log off current user, harvest system information, stop and start processes, download files from the 'Net and execute them, capture network user information, search disks for files and do more as desired by the far away hacker.

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Microsoft has acknowledged the vulnerability, and says as a best practice, users should always exercise extreme caution when opening unsolicited attachments from both known and unknown sources. As a workaround for the solution, the company suggests that users view PowerPoint files received via e-mails or Internet using PowerPoint Viewer 2003, as it does not have the said vulnerability.

“The vulnerability and patch story has long become a cat and mouse game,” says Govind Rammurthy, CEO, MicroWorld Technologies. “Though the regular exposure of Windows vulnerabilities has become commonplace for some years now, the year 2006 has hit the roof when it comes to MS office vulnerabilities. You can see many flaws being unearthed in MS Office 2000, 2003, with some unprecedented enthusiasm displayed by vulnerability researchers and malicious hackers.”

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