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## Vivekabarathi Virus Hoax Makes A Comeback

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Vivekabarathi Virus hoax is back to do rounds once again. Security experts at MicroWorld Technologies have noticed significant traffic of this email hoax in South Asia and Middle East last week. The mail goes about bluffing people that a user by name Vivekabarathi@yahoo.com will try to add them to Orkut online community and that users shouldn't accept the invitation as it will give them a deadly Virus!

This hoax started circulating since October 2005. It goes on to tell users that a 'very horrible virus' will crash their hard disk, once the invitation is accepted. There are some other variants also found for this hoax, but all of them tell more or less the same story.

Hoaxes are wrongful and misleading information spread via emails to create unnecessary panic and fear-psychosis among net users and general public. A large number of hoax mails have been about non-existing Viruses, but even scary mails on the ill effects of substances like lipsticks and cookies were found to be doing hysterical rounds, creating urban legends in the process. There were also hoax mails about the death of leading Indian film stars Shahrukh Khan and Aishwarya Rai, which even spilled over to the main stream media.

Maybe the perpetrators of these mails are doing it for cheap thrills, but definitely the harm these mails do is no less than what a Virus does. Such mails can clog your mailboxes, choke your bandwidth and spread utterly misleading and harmful

information. In enterprises, this can contribute to a severe dent in productivity levels.

One such mail in the year 2002, instructed the recipients of it to search for a file in the computer and if found, it told users to delete it, as same was a Virus. Later, it turned out that the file was a Utility of the Windows Operating system and the result naturally was not very pleasant.

“In most cases such mails can be easily identified,” says Sulabh Mahant, Security Expert, MicroWorld Technologies. “If they use too many bold and capital letters in the mail, tell you that that the virus will delete all your files in the computer or that there is no remedy for this virus, you will need to be suspicious about the mail.”

One telling sign of such mails is a request to send it to as many people as possible so that you can really make a positive impact on the society! A hoax mail about the lead content in Lipstick produced by leading American cosmetic manufacturers, reported earlier by MicroWorld, was found to be exhorting users to take up the cudgels against monstrous, heartless business houses.

AntiVirus and Content Security solutions eScan and MailScan from MicroWorld Technologies effectively block chain mails and spam from reaching your mail boxes. Also a reverse DNS check is performed to see if the connecting IP resolves to a valid domain name, which ensures the authenticity of the domain that sends the mail.

“The days when these mails were just about some harmless prank have long ceased,” says Govind Rammurthy, CEO, MicroWorld Technologies. “Their impact on the business and resources of enterprises are significant, with direct financial consequences. If you encounter mails like these, please delete them and don’t forward them to your friends and colleagues.”

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