

RE: Mac OS X no longer immune to viruses!

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*Source:* <http://unix.derkeiler.com/Newsgroups/comp.os.vms/2006-05/msg00317.html>

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- *From:* "Main, Kerry" <[Kerry.Main@xxxxxx](mailto:Kerry.Main@xxxxxx)>
  - *Date:* Thu, 4 May 2006 14:29:38 -0400
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-----Original Message-----

From: Michael D. Ober [[mailto:obermd."@alum.mit.edu.nospam](mailto:obermd.)]

Sent: May 4, 2006 9:04 AM

To: Info-VAX@xxxxxxxxxxxxx

Subject: Re: Mac OS X no longer immune to viruses!

"Karsten Nyblad" <[nospam@xxxxxxxxxxxxx](mailto:nospam@xxxxxxxxxxxxx)> wrote in message  
[news:4459cd57\\$0\\$60786\\$157c6196@xxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxx](mailto:news:4459cd57$0$60786$157c6196@xxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxx)

Bob Koehler wrote:

In article

<[445852b9\\$0\\$67263\\$157c6196@xxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxx](mailto:445852b9$0$67263$157c6196@xxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxx)>, Karsten  
Nyblad <[nospam@xxxxxxxxxxxxx](mailto:nospam@xxxxxxxxxxxxx)> writes:

Michael D. Ober wrote:

If the MacIntosh becomes  
more common, it's security  
by obscurity

security

model will fail.

The same thing could be said about VMS.  
OS X is based on the MACH  
kernel, where most of the processing takes  
place in

processes that do

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not have access to more than they need.  
VMS is not

superior by design

to OS X when it comes to security. VMS  
might be better

coded and might

have better coding standards, but it is naive  
to think

that there are no

security bugs hidden in the millions of lines  
of code of VMS.

VMS does not rely on security by obscurity. That's FUD.

VMS is

superior by design than any UNIX based OS. Sure, there  
might be a bug  
in there somewhere but it IS the design that makes the  
difference.

You did not get my point. OS X does not rely on security  
by obscurity

either. Thus it is also FUD to claim that OS X does.

When an OS has as little market share as OS X has had in the  
past, for all  
practical purposes it is obscure to virus writers. They  
simply won't target  
it because they can't make as much havoc or steal as much  
with it. Thus,  
Security By Obscurity.

Mike.

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Please .. Lets not be juvenile about this.

"security by obscurity" is another term similar to "legacy" that is often used by those that are less informed when they want to make derogatory comments about something they know very little about.

No vendor plans their security by obscurity, so those that state otherwise are those that fall into the bucket of "less informed".

No vendor makes a platform that is 100% secure – heck, just watch Mission Impossible II movie. Yes, I know it's a movie, but you can see my point.

Are some platforms inherently more secure by design?

Absolutely.

Do the platforms that are more secure have the same market share as those that are less secure by design?

Perhaps not, but design and market share are two different topics, so please do not mix the two. Stay focussed.

The fact is that there are some platforms that are inherently better designed from a base security perspective. And while less secure platforms can be made more secure with additional labour, attachments and wrapping etc, when kernel or some other base security issues are constantly being uncovered in that base design, all of the wrappings, additional effort to retest applications etc need to be re-done after the patch is applied.

Now, if this security issue on less secure platforms were an occasional incident, then the impact to Customers would be minimal. However, when these base security issues become a monthly occurrence (Windows/Linux/others), then this really is a big opportunity for hackers as they know that when companies have hundreds of these servers, the chance of these servers being up to date with patches is slim to none.

As a recent post indicated, the reason hackers focus on the weaker platforms is very simple – it is because they can. Being successful and bragging rights is what drives the hacker community.

An analogy might be to ask the question "why do street crooks attack corner stores, liquor stores and not go after the bigger banks, casino's etc?"

Simple – the crooks know they have a much better chance at being

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successful attacking less secure targets than a bank or a casino. Of course, that is not to say the bank or the casino can not be hit, just that to do this requires a much more sophisticated attack.

HP OpenVMS is like the bigger bank or the casino.

If you want some additional background on this, check out:

<http://h71028.www7.hp.com/ERC/downloads/4AA0-2896ENW.pdf>

[http://h71000.www7.hp.com/openvms/whitepapers/TCS\\_2004.pdf](http://h71000.www7.hp.com/openvms/whitepapers/TCS_2004.pdf)

Regards

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OpenVMS – the secure, multi-site OS that just works.

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