

Computer threats up 48 percent for year

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New computer threats increased by 48 percent in 2005 as cybercriminals turn to targeted attacks.

Released Tuesday, the Sophos annual security report names Zafi-D as the year's worst malware.

Threat management solutions company Sophos reported the Top 10 malware threats of 2005 in a new in-depth study into the year's most pressing security issues.

According to the company, in a year that has seen the number of new threats rise by a staggering 48 percent, the lingering Zafi-D worm has taken the No. 1 spot in the virus chart, while last year's hardest-hitting virus, Netsky-P, dropped to No. 2. In contrast, Sober-Z -- only unleashed in November 2005 -- has already climbed to No. 3 as it continues to disrupt and clog networks worldwide.

The "Sophos Security Threat Management Report 2005" reveals that on average, one in every 44 e-mail messages was viral during 2005. This rose to one in 12 during major outbreaks, while 15,907 new malware threats were identified.

The Top 10 viruses of the year are as follows:

1. Zafi-D
2. Netsky-P

3. Sober-Z

4. Sober-N

5. Zafi-B

6. Mytob-BE

7. Mytob-AS

8. Netsky-D

9. Mytob-GH

10. Mytob-EP

"Don't let the figures fool you -- old-timers may head up the top ten, but the enormous rise in the number of new threats shows that 2005 has been anything but quiet on the malware front," said Graham Cluley, senior technology consultant at Sophos. "This huge increase stems from the escalating interest in authoring Trojans, worms and viruses shown by criminal gangs intent on making a profit. By focusing their efforts on a smaller number of victims, cybercriminals can target them with bespoke malware, increasing their chances of slipping under the security net."

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