

Happy 20th birthday to the computer virus

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The PC virus is celebrating its 20th birthday this year, according to one computer-security group.

Finland-based F-Secure said that the first boot sector virus, Brian, was found in January 1986 and infected computers via floppy disks.

Infection through floppy disks was common from 1986 to 1995 but was limited in scope as to the damage it could do as it was done only through shared disks.

"As email became more widespread, so followed email worms and individual worms which reached global epidemic levels in just one day. Most notable in this connection was one of the very first emails worms, Loveletter aka ILOVEYOU, which caused widespread havoc and financial loss in 1999 before it was brought under control," F-Secure

said in a news release.

"Certainly the most significant change has been the evolution of virus writing hobbyists into criminally operated gangs bent on financial gain," said F-Secure's Chief Research Officer Mikko Hypponen. "And this trend is showing no signs of stopping," he added.

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