

Computer forensics links internet postcards to virus

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Fake Internet postcards circulating through e-mail inboxes worldwide are carrying links to the virus known as Zeus Bot, said Gary Warner, director of computer forensics at the University of Alabama at Birmingham (UAB). Zeus Bot has been named America's most pervasive computer Botnet virus by Network World magazine, reportedly infecting 3.6 million U.S. computers.

"These fake postcards ask users to click and download to view the contents, and as soon as that click is made the Zeus Bot [malware](#) has infected their computers," Warner said. "Once on a user's computer, Zeus Bot will give [cyber criminals](#) access to passwords and account numbers for bank, e-mail and other sensitive online accounts."

A Botnet is a collection of compromised or infected computers that runs specific software that usually has been installed on computers without the user's knowledge.

Warner said cyber criminals who are employing the Russian-language Zeus Bot software are using the fake Internet postcards as the latest mechanism to download the [virus](#) software onto unwitting users' computers. Once the virus is on a computer it becomes a part of the Zeus [Botnet](#) and is able to steal Web site data from victims. The malware uses a graphical user interface to keep track of infected machines throughout the world and is equipped with tools that allow the criminals to prioritize the banks and related stolen accounts they want to strike, Warner said.

"These messages are standard in their design and carry a subject line that indicates they come from the Web site 1001 Postcards," Warner said.

"In this case and when it comes to messages that are supposedly from your bank, [eBay](#) or any other site, don't click on the links in an e-mail," Warner said. "Instead, type the address for the site that the message is coming from into your Web browser and log in as you normally would. If the site has an important message for you, you'll be able to find it."

Read more at Warner's blog at garwarner.blogspot.com/ .

Source: University of Alabama at Birmingham ([news](#) : [web](#))

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