

Nokia engineer blogs on Windows 8 game hacks

December 12 2012, by Nancy Owano



(Phys.org)—Nokia Engineer Justin Angel works with Windows 8 and decided to share on his blog site what he eventually discovered: Various tactics can succeed in pirating Windows 8 games distributed through the Microsoft Windows Store. Savvy hackers so inclined to do whatever it takes to avoid paying for in-game purchases could succeed, and could also remove ads from games by editing files, and even fiddle with trial versions of games to get the full release for free. Angel explained the different ploys that are possible by using some games as the report's case examples. In so doing, Angel, who formerly worked for Microsoft

before joining Nokia, would not want to be mistaken for being out to establish a school for game-cheating scoundrels. He posted his findings because he wanted his findings to be educational, so that developers and Microsoft could benefit "from an open exchange of knowledge."

Developers who rely on their revenue streams from games would most likely be [paying attention](#) to his Windows 8 report and reflecting on how such actions could affect their revenue. Developers may count on offering free trial downloads for further uptake yet would not want to know that by so doing they were opening themselves up to [piracy](#). Assorted maneuverings may involve injecting code into the buying process or changing games-associated files. Angel said the weaknesses stem from how game data is stored. He said one invites a real recipe for security incidents by storing [encrypted data](#) locally, alongside with the [algorithm](#) and the algorithm key/hash.

Two counter-notes are in order: One is that it is not easy to circumvent the games as illustrated in the step-by step blog post, as it would require those with advanced knowledge. Also, many curious [computer users](#) who heard about the blog's content were unable to see the Angel report. The [blog site went offline](#) on Tuesday and at the time of this writing is still offline. In an update, *The Verge* on Tuesday reported Microsoft's response to the Windows 8 games account. A Microsoft spokesperson said it took a extra measures to help harden Windows 8 against hackers.

The company also said that any successful software distribution channel, not just Redmond's, faces the challenge of being targeted by people wishing to circumvent the system. "We're committed to ongoing protection of both customer and developer interests."

Earlier this year, an iOS hack was discovered that allowed users to sidestep paying for in-app virtual items. That issue was patched by Apple. The exploit let users purchase digital goods inside of iOS apps

without paying for them but updated security measures in iOS took care of the problem.

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