

The SAGATUG

INTERFACE

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The San Gabriel Valley Technology User's Group. The Club for TRSDOS and MS-DOS

The Potential Dangers of Instant Messaging

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Instant Messaging (IM) has become an essential business and home computing tool. It allows you to avoid long-distance charges you might otherwise incur while speaking on the phone, and it lets you know right away whether the person you're trying to reach is at his or her computer. Because you're communicating in real time, exchanging messages with people via IM is as simple as typing in the text and hitting enter.

One of the original Instant Messaging programs was Internet Relay Chat (IRC). More recent providers include ICQ™, Yahoo Messenger™, AOL Instant Messenger™ (AIM), and MSN Messenger™. Some of the newer versions of IM software now allow you to exchange attachments, such as business documents and (for home users) photos and jokes.

But be on the lookout

As is true for any communication vehicle, with IM you get a trade-off between convenience and

vulnerability to viruses and hackers. In the old days, we used to exchange information by sharing floppy disks, so viruses were spread from one computer to another via removable media. Then email caught on and viruses were communicated through infected attachments. More recently the tremendous increase in Instant Messaging has opened up new opportunities for viruses to spread and for hackers to gain access to your system.

The moment something leaves your computer, it can be intercepted while in transit and read by anyone on the Internet. Many users like to leave their IM on all the time, in the background, which makes them even more vulnerable because that gives hackers more opportunity to find them.

There are ways to protect yourself

Your best bet, of course, is not to send anything sensitive via IM unless it's encrypted or password-protected. Change your password frequently. Even better, establish a regular schedule for changing your passwords; you might want to set alerts on your desktop calendar to remind you. Keep your IM software up-to-date. Manufacturers regularly release new versions of popular IM software, offering new security features and fixing bugs that in older versions may have left you vulnerable to viruses and hackers. If you are running the most recent version of the application, check the manufacturer's Web site for patches, which are programs that supplement the original application to fix problems or security vulnerabilities.

Memory Jogger...



See you at the next SAGATUG meeting this Friday, December 13, 2002 from 7 to 10 p.m. at the Arcadia Park Senior Citizen's Center, 405 S. Santa Anita Ave. (See page four for directions and more upcoming events.)

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Review of Jargonary, a Program of Cyber Terms

By John Calhoun

Jargonary is a program that gives definitions for computer terms and acronyms. The user types in a word or acronym, and the program comes back with a list of the closest matches, starting with the computer's best guess, and alphabetically following is a listing of all other words with the same first letter in the database.

If the word is a acronym, the program turns it into the actual words it represents. Clicking on the expanded acronym will display the full definition. If the resulting definition uses words that need further explanation or definition, they are displayed as links. When the user clicks on one of these links the definition of that word is displayed.

Using the back button takes the user back to the original word or acronym. In fact, the back button takes him/her back as far as he or she wants to go, in fact as far back as the beginning of the current session.

(Continued from page 1)

IM Dangers

Install antivirus software and personal firewall protection

Because sending and receiving attachments via Instant Messaging makes you vulnerable to viruses, you need to screen your attachments to prevent viruses from infecting your computer. Now, [Norton AntiVirus™ 2003](#) protects users of Instant Messaging by adding a new scanning layer for incoming attachments or files received through the Yahoo, MSN, or AOL Instant Messengers.

Firewalls protect you not only while you're using your IM software, but they enhance security for your computer as a whole. Firewalls keep hackers at bay and prevent sensitive data from being sent out without your permission. [Norton™ Personal Firewall 2003](#) protects your computer against intruders, hackers and malicious code, and keeps your private information safe from prying eyes.

Norton Personal Firewall, Norton AntiVirus, and other indispensable Internet tools are available together as [Norton Internet Security™ 2003](#), your complete online security suite for comprehensive protection against hackers, viruses, and privacy threats.

The program even lists related websites and newsgroups for further research within the definition. Clicking on them will take the user directly to the related link on the Internet.

Even though the program includes definitions for more than 13,000 computer jargons, it works very fast. But I really think the acronyms should be completely defined on the first click.

Some terms were not even included, like "nerd" which should have been the first word they decided to include in the program. It does define the term "Nerd pride" however.

Some of the other terms I thought should have been included are the new breed of DVD's coming out like DVD RAM; DVD+R; and DVD R/W. Another problem I have with the program is this: as long as you type something that is in the database, the closest match list appears on the right-hand side of the screen. But as soon as you type something not in the database, the list disappears totally. For example: typing DVD brings up the listing starting at DVD. Adding a "-" to it to make it "DVD-", DVD disappears, and the listing now starts with DVD-. Typing "DVD+" makes the entire list disappear, since the database doesn't include DVD+R.

Jargonary

Despite the few annoyances I've mentioned, I think the program would be good for those who are stymied by computer terminology. It's even good for those who are knowledgeable about computers, since most of us don't know it all ! It's fast, and very easy to use. I jumped right in and started using the program without using the help system to figure it out. In fact, this program is so easy to use, it doesn't need any instructions in order to use it. Never-the-less, the simple instructions for its use are on the screen when you start the program.

Jargonary Development Team, support@jargonary.com

Shareware - \$19.00 to register



"Quick:Delete the jdbgmgr.exe file!!"

By Gabe Kingsley, PIBMUG's SanFrancisco Special Correspondent

I've received a few of these dumb alerts over the past week. You haven't received one? It's an e-mail hoax pretending to be a virus warning that tells people to delete their Java Debugger Manager file, called jdbgmgr.exe. What really ticks me off is the open list of recipients, often 30 to 50 of them, that become fodder for all sorts of junk through the systems of others. So I'm on a one-man crusade to get people to use Blind cc's for all mail, unless there is a compelling reason (such as a work group, etc.) in which they need to know who else received the message. Heck, I even send out tutorials for most e-mail programs to eliminate any excuses they may have. Here's what I tell people whenever they forward me an ALERT!! ALERT!! About any virus:

Hey, Klez? The most recent e-mail virus you're asking about is the Klez, and it has powers not seen in earlier types. Klez can select an e-mail address at random from a CC list in a message on your or someone else's computer and send itself to the recipients of other messages. It's not limited to those addresses in your address book. In addition, it can "spoof" the return address, so that even if you were not the sender of a message infected with the Klez virus, your name and address may appear as the originator.

This is bad stuff and we should expect a raft of "me too" versions to come along! Another, less harmful but no less irritating offense is the warning running around the world, advising you to delete a specific file from your system because it contains a virus.

This is a hoax! The file, jdbgmgr.exe, is one that Windows put there and enables certain Java scripting capabilities. You need it! You may receive either the Klez virus or the relatively innocuous hoax warning described above because your name and address were in someone's CC list. One of the greatest potential dangers is in the e-mails that are forwarded, forwarded and forwarded again by unwitting people. I'm sure you get them every day, and may even pass them along.

The result is list after list of available addresses the Klez virus can use to send itself to people you don't know, and for people you don't know to send it to you, possibly giving the impression it came from you. When you forward a message, COPY ONLY THE TEXT into a new message and send it to your friends.

DO NOT just forward the existing message, com-

plete with the previous lists of recipients and their addresses. If you want to forward a message, take care to manually remove the list of previous recipients to preserve their safety.

It's really easy. Learn and Use Blind CC. When sending messages to a group of people, unless it is REQUIRED that each one see the names of all others who received the message, PLEASE USE A BLIND RECIPIENT list. I am not aware of any e-mail program that the message recipients see only their own address, and not the entire list of recipients.

If you have AOL, it is the easiest thing to do: Simply bracket all recipients in a pair of parentheses (address1, address2) each separated by a comma. If you use Microsoft Outlook or Outlook Express, there is a special field for "Bcc" (Blind copies) just below the "To" and "Cc" rows. If you don't see it when you open the program, click on View and select "Bcc Field." Eudora and Netscape Navigator also have blind recipient capabilities. Yahoo! and Hotmail users can find the "Bcc" field for entering addresses in the online address header.

The Juno mail software works very just like AOL in that you can enclose multiple addresses in parentheses to make them blind, and as with AOL, they must be separated by a comma. By doing this each recipient will see only their own address, and not anyone else's.

So far, because Mac's represent such a small percentage of the computers in use, the people who create the worms and viruses do not make them work with Mac computers. However, anyone using a Mac who does not hide the recipients of their e-mails makes their recipients vulnerable to the possibility of being hit with a virus from someone else on their CC list!

Anyone who wants to protect their privacy and safety will appreciate your doing this. Few things about e-mail bother me more than when something I sent gets forwarded to a large list of people I don't know, and because my address is now in their message base, I am then vulnerable to receiving a virus or one of those hoax warnings from them ... or anyone to whom they forward that message. Please try to use blind recipient lists. It will make us all safer from viruses, worms and hoaxes. Copyright © 2002 by Gabe Kingsley. Reproduced with permission. Article reproduction coordinated by Steve Bass, Pasadena IBM Users Group. Gabe Kingsley is a San Francisco Bay Area based consultant and can be reached by e-mail: words4use@yahoo.com only if you promise to blind copy him.

**Next SAGATUG Meeting
Time and Place:**

7 to 10 p.m., Friday, December 13, 2002
**Arcadia Park Senior Citizen's Center, 405 South
 Santa Anita Avenue, Arcadia.**
(In the park just south of Huntington Drive)
Meetings are on the second Friday of every month

Club Officers and Board Members:

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Upcoming Events:

Manhattan Beach, last Saturday, monthly, TRW Swap Meet, Admission Free.

Santa Ana, last Sunday of each odd month, ACP, 1310 E. Edinger, Admission Free.

Pomona Swap Meet 3rd Saturday, monthly, at Cal Poly Pomona, 3801 W. Temple Ave., Admission Free

Pomona Fairplex, December 28 & 29, 2002 (Sat. & Sun.) bldgs. 6 & 7at LA Fair grounds, Gate 14, Admission \$7, plus parking.

Burbank, June 21 & 22, 2003(Sat. & Sun.), Hilton Burbank Airport & Convention Center, 2500 Hollywood Way, Burbank, CA 91505. 10 a.m. to 5 p.m. \$5 admission

Costa Mesa, December 15, 2002 (Sat. & Sun.) bldg. 10, 2002 (Sat. & Sun.), Orange County Fair and Exposition Center, 88 Fair Drive, Costa Mesa, CA 92626, 10:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m., \$5 admission

Santa Monica, December 21 & 22, 2002, Santa Monica Civic Auditorium, 1855 Main Street, Santa Monica, CA 90401

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Deadline for the Newsletter

The deadline for the INTERFACE is the last Saturday of the month.

Republication:

Articles may be republished if credit is given to the author and the San Gabriel Valley Technology User's Group.

Please visit the new SAGATUG website at www.sagatug.org There you will find photos of the meeting site maps to the meeting, articles from other sources and an archive of the SAGATUG

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