

Computer worm threatens Internet, attorney general says

Media General News Service

Attorney General John Ashcroft warned computer users Wednesday about a new Internet threat that could slow the worldwide network worse than the "Code Red" worm that struck earlier this summer.

Ashcroft said that the FBI and private companies are assessing the effects of the program, known as "W32-Nimda," which has affected possibly tens of thousands of computers. As the program spreads, its activity can slow or shut down Internet service for regular users.

"The scanning activity thus far indicates that this could be heavier than the July activity of Code Red," Ashcroft said. Ashcroft dismissed the idea that Nimda is related to the attacks in New York and Washington.

"There is no evidence at this time which links this infection with the terrorist attack of last week," he said.

Code Red mobilized law-enforcement agencies and private companies in an unprecedented effort, as the Internet worm infected hundreds of

thousands of computers and threatened a meltdown of the Internet. They implored computer users to install protective software.

On security e-mail lists, system administrators nationwide reported unprecedented activity related to the worm, which tries to break into Microsoft's Internet Information Services software.

That software was the same targeted by Code Red, and is typically found on computers running Microsoft Windows NT or 2000.

Most home users, including those running Windows 95, 98 or ME, can also be infected by way of an infected e-mail or through a company network.

Ken Van Wyk, chief technology officer at ParaProtect, said that the worm tries to wriggle in through 6 known vulnerabilities in Microsoft's IIS, including the security hole left in some computers by the "Code Red II" worm, which followed Code Red in August.

Code Red, by comparison, attacked through only one hole, which could be patched by downloading a program from Microsoft's Web site.

In addition to direct

Internet attacks, the worm can also travel by way of e-mail. The e-mail message is typically blank, and contains an attachment called "README.EXE."

Anti-virus experts warn that users shouldn't open unexpected attachments.

Efforts to isolate and track the worm were hampered by the swiftness of the attack. Vincent Gullotto, the head antivirus researcher for McAfee.com, said that the first report came at about 9 a.m., from a site in Norway.

On Monday, the FBI's National Infrastructure Protection Center warned that a hacker group called the "Dispatchers" said they would attack "communications and finance infrastructures" on or about Tuesday.

The Dispatchers group has recently defaced Middle Eastern Web sites in an apparent retaliation for last week's attacks—a job that is far easier than creating a powerful Internet worm.

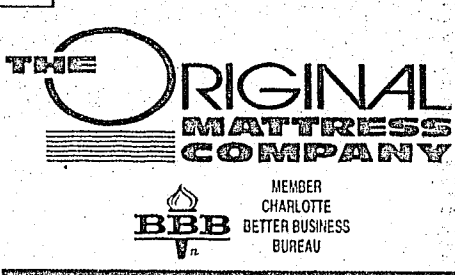
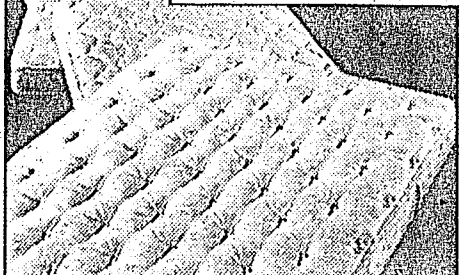
F-Secure, an anti-virus company, discovered that the message "Copyright 2001 R.P.China" is present in the worm, indicating a possible link to China.

Last week, the FBI warned there could be an increase in hacking incidents after the terrorist attacks. They advised computer users to update anti-virus software, get all possible security updates for other software and be extra careful online.

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Section B

Sports

Devils drop to ninth following first football defeat

Repercussions from last week's first loss of the season for Mooreville's varsity football team continue to be felt.

After rising as high as fourth in the state's Associated Press high school state 3A class football poll earlier this season on the strength of a 2-0 start, the Blue Devils have slipped back a few rungs and now take a ninth-place rank into this week's homecoming game.

The Devils, West finalists last year while establishing a school record for wins, now field a 2-1 mark after last week's 31-13 drubbing delivered at the hands of 4A class member Davie County, which also remained ranked within its state poll.

Davie County's War Eagles improved to the 40 mark and stayed ninth in their respective class ranking.

The AP high school football poll is voted on by a statewide panel of prep spots writers. Teams voted on receive points and are ranked by those points totals. Mooreville gathered in a total of 53 points to rank

ninth. Senior High remains the only member of its first-year North Piedmont Conference to sit among the state's top 10. However, several other members have also received votes. They include Statesville and Kannapolis Brown, whose respective points totals kept them out of the top 10.

As fortunes would have it, the Blue Devils won't meet either of those two squads until facing them both within a three-week stretch to close out the regular season late next month.

Shelby Crest continues to lead the state's 3A ranking. It is followed by Jamestown Ragdale, last year's state runner-up and the team responsible for ending Mooreville's season in the West finals. Also among the top five are Eastern Randolph, Southern Durham and Northeast Guilford.

Rounding out the top 10 include, in order, Anson County reigning state champion Bertie County, High Point Central, and Erwin Trilon.

Mooreville looks to

squelch its fall from those ranks when playing for just the second time this season at home when meeting South Rowan Friday night.

It will also account for the

home team's annual homecoming contest, it taking place much earlier in the season than usual this year. It is also the Blue Devils' final game before heading into the

opening of NFC play the following week.

Traditional homecoming surroundings will be present throughout the contest, carrying a 7:30 p.m. start in the

Mooreville Stadium, with the crowning of this year's senior class queen and her underclass court taking place during special halftime ceremonies.

Rudd, RYR to show patriotism

More than just pride will be with Mooreville-based Robert Yates Racing pilot Ricky Rudd and his fellow team entries this weekend.

When the RYR teams, including Rudd's No. 28 Ford,

return to the track for Sunday's MBNA Cal Ripkin Jr. 400 NASCAR Winston Cup Series at Dover

Downs, International Speedway, they will be sporting a patriotic look honoring American in response to the recent tragedies in New York, Washington D.C., and Pennsylvania.

With the teams turning their attention to the 2001 Winston Cup Series championship, both Rudd's Ford and the No. 88 entry piloted by teammate Dale Jarrett will have the American flag prominently displayed on the front hood of each car.

"The tragedy our country faced was terrible," allowed Robert Yates, multi-car team owner. "Our sponsors have given up their space so we could

put the American flags prominently on our cars. We are a strong nation, and I'm confident we will overcome these tragedies. I'm happy to be able to provide a visible way for us to show our pride in our country."

Also, Rudd and RYR will each contribute \$10 per lap completed in Sunday's 400-lap race to The Disaster Relief Fund for the American Red Cross, which will help victims and families affected by the terrorist attacks on New York and Washington.

The Winston Cup Series took last weekend off in tribute of the terrorist attacks.

Rudd, in his second full season with RYR after spending six seasons as a car owner/driver and holding the series lead for most consecutive seasons with at least one win, heads into this week's race sitting in second place in the updated points championship. It's as high as he has ever been in this stage of the season in quest of his first career points championship.

RYR teammate Jarrett won his points title in the 1999 season.

Course staff takes aim at Tough Day revenge

Mike Barnhardt, golf course superintendent at the Mooreville Municipal Golf Course, has been taking a close look these days at each of his 18-hole public facility's greens.

He's being careful to note every nook and cranny every bend and break. The more the slope on certain potential putts, the better, as he plots what he and his maintenance staff are calling their revenge, set to take place this week.

With Barnhardt picking the spots for pin placements, his staff will hope to get that revenge on those who make it a regular-round affair to elicit off-hand comments on

the course's conditions as well as those who may not play the town-owned spread on such a regular basis in the form of a Tough Day Tournament.

The event billed as a golf staff revenge affair is being held today (Friday) at the local course.

A sign-up sheet has available for week for this month's attraction taking place through the Mooreville Golf Association. Play will be held in the form of a two-player, best-ball procedure, with awards available to the teams with the lowest outright gross and with-handi-

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