Sasser spreading slowly
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MAY 02, 2004
This report appears on australianIT.com.au.

A NEW computer worm which uses similar tactics to last year's notorious Blaster has so far failed to rack up victims as fast as its predecessor.

However computer security experts were waiting to see whether infections from the Sasser worm would skyrocket as office workers around the world returned to work on Monday.
The worm, which appeared on on Wednesday and began gathering pace late Friday, infects some editions of Microsoft Windows 2000, XP and Windows Server 2003. It does not affect other versions of Windows such as NT or 98, or Macintosh or Linux computers.
The only indication of infection is that Sasser causes computers to run more slowly, while it quietly propagates itself to other computers via the internet.
Graham Cluley, senior technology consultant for US software security company Sophos, said that unlike most previous viruses Sasser was not spread by email. "The Sasser worm spreads in a similar way to last year's serious Blaster outbreak," he said, by "exploiting security holes in Microsoft's software".
Mr Cluley said home users were especially vulnerable "because they are often not running the latest anti-virus protection, haven't downloaded the latest security patches from Microsoft, and may not be running a personal firewall," he said.
Tracking tools provided by another security firm, Trend Micro, showed reports of Sasser infections were still less frequent than older viruses such as MyDoom and NetSky. Sasser was the fifth most frequently reported virus both worldwide and in Australia, with only 60 reports in the 24 hours to Sunday night. Sasser was ranked seventh in North America, which has the largest number of internet users.
Most large security companies said it was spreading at a slower rate than August's Blaster or MSBlast worm, which eventually infected about 10 million computers.
The worm takes advantage of a vulnerability in Windows which was discovered by US-based eEye Digital Security.
On April 13 Microsoft, the world's biggest software company, issued a warning about the vulnerability along with a "patch" that protects computers by fixing a flaw in the software.
The low rate of infection suggested that after dozens of viruses and worms, from ILOVEYOU to Code Red and MyDoom, computer users were becoming more canny about warding off viruses, although eEye chief operating officer Firas Raouf said the worm was poorly written and "somewhat benign".
However he added that it could be a precursor to a more virulent effort.
"It is absolutely imperative that (computer network) administrators scan their networks and identify vulnerable systems and take corrective actions," Mr Raouf said. Mike Bradshaw, spokesman for anti-virus company Symantec, said the company had received a small number of reports of suspected Sasser infections, and only one-fifth of those were from businesses.
"Right now we are not seeing it spread rapidly," he said. "These numbers are quite low. For a virus that is spreading rapidly we would expect to see about 100 reports per hour.
Mr Bradshaw said the number of infections could grow "exponentially" when people began returning to work on Monday.