



Search the Web:

Help

Great Deal: MSN 9 Internet Access

Autos
Careers & Jobs
Dating & Personals
Entertainment
Games
Health
Hotmail
House & Home
Money
My MSN
News
Shopping
Slate Magazine

Sports by **ESPN**
Travel
Women

Going Places

Air Tickets
City Guides
Hotel Deals
Local Traffic
Maps & Directions

Look it up

Encarta
MSN Toolbar
White Pages
Yellow Pages

Shop

Auctions
Barnes & Noble.com
Dell Deals
Digital Camera Deals
Discover Overstock.com
Flowers for Mom \$29.99

Living

Buy a House
Career Training
Find a Job
Fitness & Recreation
Get a Date
Rent an Apartment

News & Weather

Business
Election Guide 2004
MLB Baseball
MSN Video
Sports Scores
Weather

People

Family
Groups
Kids
Latino

Technology

Downloads
Go Mobile
MSN Direct Watches
MSN Premium
PC Safety & Security
Tech & Gadgets

Fun

Chat
Free Games
Greeting Cards
Horoscopes
Photos

More on MSN

Optimized for Broadband



A Dream Car for Hard-core Drivers
The Lotus Elise is fast, fun & (yes) street-legal

MSNBC News

- Prisoner abuse probe widens
- 'Sasser' worm still spreading
- Saudi urges Americans to leave

ESPN Sports

- Tillman hailed as national hero
- Garnett unseats Duncan as MVP



Protect your PC
Update against Sasser worm

Offer: See how long it would take you to make \$1M

Also on MSN

Gifts for Mom • Allergy Guide • Find a Job • Popup Blocker



How work can make you fat

- When to start on your first million
- Top 10 hotel chains for 'road warriors'
- What age group prone to indigestion?
- Roses: Buy 1 dozen, get 1 free

Build Your Career

- Top 10 new-grad jobs
- Re-invent your resume
- Are you bad co-worker?
- Search for jobs

Featured Offers

- Luxury sheets on sale
- Check credit score free
- Online degrees that pay
- Travel deals

MSN Broadband Highlights



Now on MSN Video

- Bobby Brown in exclusive: 'I am not a perfect man'
- John Mayer performs
- Easy Aslar food
- Single sheep sheared of 60 pounds of wool

Entertainment

Free Radio • New DVDs • Now Playing • Trailers • TV Listings



Celeb fashion: crazy coils & more

- '90210' star to marry girlfriend
- Teen boy-band Menudo being revived
- Who won weekend box office?
- 'One on One' star to play King of Pop

Entertainment Today

- Only McDonald's for a month?
- New Jessica Simpson video

Fun & Games

- Wheel of Fortune
- Play Zuma!

City Guides

Get local news, weather, and regional information:

Enter your zip code:

New: Expanded local coverage in cities across the U.S.

My MSN

Hotmail

Messenger

Mom's Day

Lose Weight Now

- Atkins Made Easy
- Free Diet Profile
- Slim-Fast Plan
- Drop 2 Jean Sizes
- Lose w/ Low Carb

Sponsored by
eDiets.com

Verizon Online
DSL with
MSN[®] Premium

1st month FREE!*
Learn more

Microsoft: Sasser worm - What to do

Money			refresh
Dow	10,314.00	 88.43	Get Quote:
NASDAQ	1,938.72	 18.57	
S&P	1,117.49	 10.19	
Quotes delayed at least 20 minutes			
Find a Broker: Ameritrade, ShareBuilder, Trade Now, TD Waterhouse			
Find a Mortgage: LendingTree			
Insurance • Loans • News • Markets • Credit Report			

Specials, Offers, & More

- Acne problem?
- Ancestors
- Auto price quotes
- Cool, free flip phones
- Find old friends
- Free credit report
- Get an online degree
- Need a lawyer?
- Used car deals
- Win an Alaskan cruise

Shopping

Mother's Day Gifts • Tech Guide • Spring Sports • Books



- Hanging hammock chair only \$46
- COACH Mother's Day favorites
- Free shipping at Fossil
- Roses for Mom \$29.99
- Godiva free gift with purchase
- Free gift wrap - Williams-Sonoma

Today's Sales & Deals

- Massive liquidation: save up to 77% on accessories, electronics, sheet sets & more

Popular Searches

Switch to narrowband version

Make this your home page

From MSN

Get help with MSN • Advertise on MSN

• Ad Free Radio

• High-Speed Net Deals

• Internet Access Deals

• MSN Alerts

• MSN Direct Watches

• MSN Internet Software

• MSN on your cell phone

• Staying Safe Online

• Tour the new MSN.com

• Try MSN TV

Advanced Search • Get the MSN Toolbar

Top 5 Search Movers

1. shar jackson

2. pat tillman

3. kevin federline

4. ssc results

5. bake sale

Suggested Searches

• payday loan

• debt consolidation

• web conferencing

• hotel

• birth certificate

Search the Web:

From Microsoft

Microsoft.com • Help & Support • Training & Books

• Windows Update

• Downloads

• Windows XP

• Office Online

• Critical security updates

• Protect your PC

• Games & Xbox

• Small Business

MSN Worldwide

• US Latino

• Australia

• Canada

• China

• France

• Germany

• India

• Japan

• Korea

• Mexico

• UK

• More countries

Try MSN Internet Software for FREE!

Feedback | Help

©2004 Microsoft Corporation. All rights reserved. Terms of Use Advertise TRUSTe Approved Privacy Statement Anti-Spam Policy
GetNetWise Quotes provided by Comstock

http://www.msn.com/ (2 of 2)5/3/2004 2:17:44 PM



MSNBC News

[Alerts](#) | [Newsletters](#) | [Help](#)

sponsored by



Tech / Science

[The Big Idea](#)

[Science](#)

[Space News](#)

[Games & Gadgets](#)

[Hacks, Scams, Spam](#)

[Tech Tools](#)

[Return to Mars](#)

[Genetic Genealogy](#)

[News](#)

[Business](#)

[Sports](#)

[Tech / Science](#)

[Entertainment](#)

[Health](#)

[Travel](#)

[Opinions](#)

[Weather](#)

[Local News](#)

[Newsweek](#)

TECHNOLOGY & SCIENCE

Hacks, Viruses, Scams & Spam

'Sasser' computer worm still spreading

Home users likely to be hit hardest, experts warn

By **Bob Sullivan**

Technology correspondent

MSNBC

Updated: 08:07 PM PT May03, 2004

The fast-spreading "Sasser" computer worm continued its rampage Monday, though it appeared to peak before the day was over. Still, experts were worried that many more home consumers might become infected the next time they log onto the Internet.

Sasser is unlike most worms consumers are familiar with -- it's easy to become infected, simply by connecting the Internet. No e-mail attachment must be opened; in fact, no user interaction is required at all. And making matters worse, traditional consumer desktop antivirus software won't prevent infection, even if it's updated.

"This one is a real pain in the butt," said Patrick Hinojosa, chief technology officer at antivirus firm Panda Software.

There are actually four versions of the worm making their way around the Internet now, most released during the weekend. Only installation of a Microsoft software patch, or a well-designed firewall, can prevent infection. That's why more home users than corporate users were infected by this worm, said Vincent Gullotto, antivirus expert at Network Associations Inc. -- they are less likely to keep up with software patches or firewalls.

"It's safe to say at this point this hit harder on end users, but it seems to have leveled off now," he said Monday night at 8 p.m. ET.

advertisement

Today Show

Nightly News

Dateline NBC

Meet the Press

MSNBC TV

News Video

MSNBC Shopping

Search

MSNBC:

Advanced Search

It's still unclear how many computers have been infected. The techniques for estimating e-mail viruses don't work for guessing the impact of Sasser, and estimates ranged from 100,000 computers to several million PCs worldwide. Some antivirus firms rated it a medium risk; others a high risk.

Depending on a number of factors, infections can occur quickly -- in some cases, only a minute or two after a user has connected to the Internet. Users who haven't updated their systems might not have time to [download the Microsoft patch](#) before they become infected, said Alfred Huger, virus expert at Symantec Corp.

HOW-TO

Protect yourself against 'Sasser' worm

Concerned your computer is infected? Try these steps:

- Block
- Check
- Protect

Enable a firewall to prevent infection or reinfection. The firewall will block Sasser from reaching your computer. It's best to do this before connecting to the Internet. To turn on the WindowsXP firewall, follow the instructions on Microsoft's Web site at <http://www.microsoft.com/security/protect/windowsxp/firewall.asp>. Enabling the firewall may prevent other software, such as Internet-based gaming, from working correctly. If so, refer to Microsoft's additional instructions.

Download a free "cleaner" program from an antivirus vendor. The program should remove the virus and repair any damage it might have caused. You can also download the program on a friend's computer to a floppy disk, then run it on your computer before connecting to the Internet. Such free programs can be downloaded from McAfee (link: <http://vil.nai.com/vil/stinger/>), Symantec (link <http://securityresponse.symantec.com/avcenter/venc/data/w32.sasser.removal.tool.html>), or several other vendors.

Your computer can still become reinfectd unless the appropriate patch is installed. Get the right patch for your PC at <http://www.microsoft.com/technet/security/bulletin/MS04-011.msp>. Microsoft recommends a free scan of your PC for any other unpatched vulnerabilities, which is available here: <http://specials.msn.com/msn/security.asp?GT1=3391>



RESOURCE GUIDE

- [Buy Life Insurance](#)
- [Spring Home Decor](#)
- [Yellow pages](#)
- [expedia.com](#)
- [Shopping](#)
- [Small Business Tips](#)

XP and Windows 2000 vulnerable

Only computers running Microsoft's Windows XP and Windows 2000 can be infected; the worm exploits a vulnerability in those systems that was revealed last month. As part of a new class of computer viruses called "network worms," the malicious program is similar to last year's Slammer and Blaster worms. Microsoft said Blaster cost it "millions of dollars of damages," and has issued a \$250,000 bounty for information on the whereabouts of its author. (MSNBC is a Microsoft - NBC joint venture.)

Blaster and Slammer also hung around the Internet for months, infecting and reinfecting unpatched machines for months, even after the initial outbreak died down. Sasser may continue to cause such "background noise" for a while, experts said. But while Sasser spread quickly, the initial outbreak failed to reach the level of either of the worms that hit last summer, said Pete Allor, director of Internet



Bob Sullivan

Technology correspondent

- [Click for profile](#)
- [E-mail the author](#)

MORE SULLIVAN

- [Con artists target phone system for deaf](#)
- [Software sniffs out phishy Web sites](#)
- [Even the law can't stop all sales calls](#)
- [New .mail domain designed to slow spam](#)
- [Privacy advocates target Google mail](#)
- [Foreign fraud hits U.S. sites hard](#)
- [Broadband by 2007? Er...](#)
- [Spyware at center of wiretap case](#)
- [Consumers still falling for phish](#)
- [Hundreds hit by alleged Net drug scam](#)

Security System's X-Force Threat Intelligence division.

Because the worm generates plenty of stray Internet traffic, and in some cases causes machine to shut down, it's hard to quantify the impact of the worm currently, Huger said.

The safest way for home users to protect themselves is to enable their firewalls before they connect to the Internet -- or if they are already connected, to disconnect immediately, and enable the firewall.

- [The meth connection to identity theft](#)
- [ID theft victims face tough bank fights](#)
- [How to protect your home network](#)
- [More Sullivan: Search MSNBC](#)

Mikko Hypponen, Anti-Virus Research

Director at Finnish data security firm F-Secure, said the spread of the virus was partly slowed because it was released on a weekend, and holidays closed offices in places like the United Kingdom and Japan on Monday.

But still, the worm hit some places hard. Investment firm Goldman Sachs said some of its systems in Hong Kong were disrupted by the worm. Finnish bank Sampo temporarily closed all of its branch offices, some 130 in all, on Monday as a precaution against Sasser. In Australia, Westpac Bank said it was hit by the worm, and branches had to use pen and paper to allow them to keep trading, The Australian newspaper reported.

What consumers can do

Spread of the worm can be contained by firewalls that block certain kinds of traffic headed for computers. Corporations that do so will be protected, Huger said, and some Internet service providers will be able to protect consumers by shutting down traffic. But other simply can't afford to do so, Huger said.

The safest way for home users to protect themselves is to enable their firewalls before they connect to the Internet -- or if they are already connected, to disconnect immediately, and enable the firewall. Both vulnerable Microsoft operating systems, Windows XP and Windows 2000, come with software that can block the worm's traffic, but they are not turned on by default. WindowsXP ships with a firewall, while Windows 2000 includes similar tools. Once traffic to port 445 is blocked -- that's the worm's route into the computer -- users can reconnect to the Net and [download the patch](#). As there are variations in the way the firewalls work, Huger recommended users consult their manuals to enable the firewall.

Users who are infected likely won't realize it, Gullotto said. Their machines might slow down some, or they might notice extra traffic on their modems, but generally the virus doesn't announce itself --

except on those occasions when it forces a machine to shut down. If that happens, users will see a dialog box indicating the program LSASS.EXE has been terminated.

Since the virus doesn't do anything else malicious to infected machines -- it doesn't delete files, for example -- users can take the risk of heading straight for the Microsoft patch when they log on, Gullotto said. They may become infected while downloading the patch, and during that time, they will become a "host" and spread the virus. But installation of the patch, followed by a scan with an updated antivirus product, will serve to clean an infected system.

Sasser is among the first viruses that can infect consumers so quickly and easily, and without as much as interaction with a malicious e-mail, Huger said.

"These things are getting worse," he said.

Reuters contributed to this story.

© 2004 MSNBC Interactive

MORE FROM HACKS, VIRUSES, SCAMS & SPAM

Next →

IRS warns taxpayers of fraudulent e-mail

- 'Sasser' computer worm still spreading
- [IRS warns taxpayers of fraudulent e-mail](#)
- [Lawmakers vow to pass anti-spyware law](#)
- [U.S. charges 4 under new 'can spam' law](#)
- [Practical Futurist: Spyware War Heats Up](#)
- [Coder serves up poetry with fresh Bagle](#)
- [E-voting debate: Can we trust computers?](#)
- [Cisco router flaw could snarl Net](#)
- [Core Internet technology found vulnerable](#)
- [Hacks, Viruses, Scams & Spam Section Front](#)



TOP MSNBC STORIES

- [Prisoner abuse probe widens](#)•
- [Ex-hostage, wife to reunite](#)•
- ['Sasser' worm still spreading](#)•
- [Saudi urges Americans to leave](#)•
- [U.S. forces under fire in Najaf](#)



EDITOR'S CHOICE

- [Favorite moments from 'Friends'](#)•
- [BMW drivers have more sex](#)•
- [Sharon not expected to give up](#)•
- [Groups plan for RNC protests](#)•
- [Newsweek: Keys to women's health](#)

[Cover](#) | [News](#) | [Business](#) | [Sports](#) | [Tech/Science](#) | [Entertainment](#) | [Travel](#) | [Health](#) | [Opinions](#) | [Weather](#) | [Local News](#)
[Newsweek](#) | [Today Show](#) | [Nightly News](#) | [Dateline NBC](#) | [Meet the Press](#) | [MSNBC TV](#)

[About MSNBC.com](#) | [Newsletters](#) | [Search](#) | [Help](#) | [News Tools](#) | [Jobs](#) | [Contact Us](#) | [Terms and Conditions](#) | [Privacy](#)

© [2004 MSNBC.com](#)

MSN - More Useful Everyday

[MSN Home](#) | [My MSN](#) | [Hotmail](#) | [Shopping](#) | [Money](#) | [People & Chat](#) | [Search](#)

[Feedback](#) | [Help](#)

© 2004 Microsoft Corporation. All rights reserved. [Terms of Use](#) [Advertise](#) [TRUSTe](#) [Approved](#) [Privacy Statement](#) [GetNetWise](#) [Anti-Spam Policy](#)