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Security alert for Internet Explorer users

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Contents

17th December, 2008

THE ARTICLE

People surfing the web using Microsoft's Internet Explorer need to be extra careful. A hole has been found in the browser's security systems. The anti-virus software maker Trend Micro Inc. said the problem leaves people's computers open to hackers. Trend Micro spokesman Paul Ferguson warned the hole could let in criminals who want to hijack computers. He said security holes like this are "a goldmine for criminals because users have few ways to fight off attacks". Explorer's flaw tricks users into visiting websites that then steals passwords and other personal and confidential information. The hackers then sell this for big money on the black market. It is a sizeable problem because most of the world's computers use Internet Explorer.

Microsoft says it is investigating the flaw. Its website states that it is considering creating an emergency software patch to fix the hole. The company is advising users to try a complicated series of measures it calls "workarounds". Microsoft said: "We are actively investigating the vulnerability that these attacks attempt to exploit. We will continue to monitor the threat." The software giant assured people that it would "take the appropriate action to protect our customers". A Microsoft anti-virus blog said 0.2% of computer users may be affected. Its advice was to "always exercise caution when browsing and try to go to sites that you trust". Other experts advise switching to alternative browsers such as Firefox, Google Chrome or Opera.

WARM-UPS

1. INTERNET: Walk around the class and talk to other students about the Internet. Change partners often. After you finish, sit with your partner(s) and share your findings.

2. CHAT: In pairs / groups, decide which of these topics or words from the article are most interesting and which are most boring.

surfing / Internet browser / anti-virus software / hackers / criminals / black market / Microsoft / software patches / workarounds / threats / blogs / advice / browsing

Have a chat about the topics you liked. Change topics and partners frequently.

3. INTERNET SECURITY: You and your partner(s) will make a presentation about Internet security. Complete the table below. Share what you wrote with other students for more ideas. Decide as a class who is the best security person.

Topic	The dangers	My / Our advice
Viruses		
Firewalls		
Passwords		
Online shopping		
Backing up data		
Spam mail		

4. HACKERS: Students A **strongly** believe hackers will always be able to hijack computers; Students B **strongly** believe software companies will defeat the hackers one day. Change partners again and talk about your conversations.

5. HIJACKED: Would it be a big problem if a hacker hijacked your computer? Rank these things from 10 (= this would be a major disaster) to 1 (= this wouldn't be a problem). Talk about your ranking with your partner(s). Change partners and talk again.

_____ lost music	_____ address book vanishes
_____ passwords	_____ all photos deleted
_____ e-mail access	_____ speed becomes very, very slow
_____ credit card details	_____ other _____

6. SURFING: Spend one minute writing down all of the different words you associate with the word 'surfing'. Share your words with your partner(s) and talk about them. Together, put the words into different categories.

BEFORE READING / LISTENING

1. TRUE / FALSE: Look at the article's headline and guess whether these sentences are true (T) or false (F):

a.	Microsoft has created the most secure Internet software in the world.	T / F
b.	An anti-virus company said Internet Explorer has a security hole in it.	T / F
c.	The anti-virus company said hackers are looking for online gold.	T / F
d.	Hackers may steal your personal info and sell it illegally for large sums.	T / F
e.	Microsoft refuses to believe there is a problem with Internet Explorer.	T / F
f.	Microsoft's advice is to walk around your PC and measure any holes.	T / F
g.	A Microsoft blog said up to 0.2% of Internet users may be affected.	T / F
h.	Experts have advised people to go and watch an opera.	T / F

2. SYNONYM MATCH: Match the following synonyms from the article:

1.	surfing		a.	fault
2	open		b.	care
3.	flaw		c.	big
4.	confidential		d.	different
5.	sizeable		e.	browsing
6.	patch		f.	actions
7.	measures		g.	keep an eye on
8.	monitor		h.	exposed
9.	caution		i.	private
10.	alternative		j.	remedy

3. PHRASE MATCH: Match the following phrases from the article (sometimes more than one. combination is possible):

1.	People surfing		a.	a goldmine for criminals
2	The anti-virus software		b.	the threat
3.	security holes like this are		c.	problem
4.	The hackers then sell this for big money		d.	caution when browsing
5.	It is a sizeable		e.	maker Trend Micro Inc.
6.	creating an emergency software patch		f.	protect our customers
7.	We will continue to monitor		g.	the web
8.	take the appropriate action to		h.	to alternative browsers
9.	always exercise		i.	on the black market
10.	experts advise switching		j.	to fix the hole

WHILE READING / LISTENING

GAP FILL: Put the words into the gaps in the text.

People _____ the web using Microsoft's Internet Explorer need to be extra careful. A hole has been found in the browser's security _____. The anti-virus software maker Trend Micro Inc. said the problem leaves people's computers _____ to hackers. Trend Micro spokesman Paul Ferguson warned the hole could let in criminals who want to _____ computers. He said security holes like this are "a goldmine for criminals because users have _____ ways to fight off attacks". Explorer's flaw tricks users into visiting websites that then _____ passwords and other personal and confidential information. The hackers then sell this for big money on the _____ market. It is a _____ problem because most of the world's computers use Internet Explorer.

black

hijack

steal

surfing

sizeable

systems

few

open

Microsoft says it is investigating the flaw. Its website states that it is considering creating an _____ software patch to fix the hole. The company is advising users to try a complicated series of _____ it calls "workarounds". Microsoft said: "We are _____ investigating the vulnerability that these attacks attempt to exploit. We will continue to _____ the threat." The software giant assured people that it would "take the appropriate action to _____ our customers". A Microsoft anti-virus blog said 0.2% of computer users may be _____. Its advice was to "always exercise caution when browsing and try to go to sites that you _____". Other experts advise switching to _____ browsers such as Firefox, Google Chrome or Opera.

trust

measures

alternative

monitor

emergency

actively

affected

protect

LISTENING: Listen and fill in the spaces.

People surfing the web using Microsoft's Internet Explorer _____ careful. A hole has been found in the browser's security systems. The _____ maker Trend Micro Inc. said the problem leaves people's computers open to hackers. Trend Micro spokesman Paul Ferguson warned the hole could let in criminals who _____ computers. He said security holes like this are "a goldmine for criminals because users have few ways to fight off attacks". Explorer's _____ into visiting websites that then steals passwords and other personal and confidential information. The hackers then sell this for big money on the black market. It is a _____ because most of the world's computers use Internet Explorer.

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AFTER READING / LISTENING

1. WORD SEARCH: Look in your dictionaries / computer to find collocates, other meanings, information, synonyms … for the words **'Internet'** and **'explorer'**.

Internet	explorer

- Share your findings with your partners.
- Make questions using the words you found.
- Ask your partner / group your questions.

2. ARTICLE QUESTIONS: Look back at the article and write down some questions you would like to ask the class about the text.

- Share your questions with other classmates / groups.
- Ask your partner / group your questions.

3. GAP FILL: In pairs / groups, compare your answers to this exercise. Check your answers. Talk about the words from the activity. Were they new, interesting, worth learning…?

4. VOCABULARY: Circle any words you do not understand. In groups, pool unknown words and use dictionaries to find their meanings.

5. TEST EACH OTHER: Look at the words below. With your partner, try to recall how they were used in the text:

• need	• patch
• maker	• measures
• warned	• exploit
• fight	• action
• passwords	• 0.2
• black	• trust

STUDENT INTERNET BROWSERS SURVEY

Write five GOOD questions about Internet browsers in the table. Do this in pairs. Each student must write the questions on his / her own paper.

When you have finished, interview other students. Write down their answers.

	STUDENT 1 _____	STUDENT 2 _____	STUDENT 3 _____
Q.1.			
Q.2.			
Q.3.			
Q.4.			
Q.5.			

- Now return to your original partner and share and talk about what you found out. Change partners often.
- Make mini-presentations to other groups on your findings.

INTERNET BROWSERS DISCUSSION

STUDENT A's QUESTIONS (Do not show these to student B)

a) What did you think when you read the headline?

b) What springs to mind when you hear the term 'Internet browser'?

c) Do you have a favourite browser?

d) What do you know about browsers?

e) Do you think browser is a good name?

f) What anti-virus software do you have?

g) Do you worry about hackers hijacking your computer?

h) Do you have a special way of protecting your passwords?

i) What punishment do you think hackers should receive?

j) Is your computer a goldmine for criminals?

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INTERNET BROWSERS DISCUSSION

STUDENT B's QUESTIONS (Do not show these to student A)

a) Did you like reading this article?

b) What do you think of online shopping?

c) What do you think of security patches?

d) Are you good at working out what's wrong when your computer has a problem?

e) What do you think of Microsoft?

f) What can you do to reduce the threat from hackers?

g) When do you exercise caution in your life?

h) Are there any sites you don't or wouldn't visit because you don't trust them?

i) Would you consider switching to different browsers?

j) What questions would you like to ask Microsoft about the security hole in Internet Explorer?

LANGUAGE

People (1) _____ the web using Microsoft's Internet Explorer need to be extra careful. A hole has been found in the browser's security systems. The anti-virus software maker Trend Micro Inc. said the problem (2) _____ people's computers open to hackers. Trend Micro spokesman Paul Ferguson warned the hole could let (3) _____ criminals who want to hijack computers. He said security holes like this are "a goldmine for criminals because users have (4) _____ ways to fight off attacks". Explorer's flaw (5) _____ users into visiting websites that then steals passwords and other personal and confidential information. The hackers then sell this for big money on the black market. It is a (6) _____ problem because most of the world's computers use Internet Explorer.

Microsoft says it is investigating the flaw. Its website states that it is considering creating an emergency software patch to (7) _____ the hole. The company is (8) _____ users to try a complicated series of measures it calls "workarounds". Microsoft said: "We are actively investigating the vulnerability that these attacks attempt to exploit. We will continue (9) _____ monitor the threat." The software giant assured people that it would "(10) _____ the appropriate action to protect our customers". A Microsoft anti-virus blog said 0.2% of computer users may be affected. Its advice was to "always (11) _____ caution when browsing and try to go to sites that you trust". Other experts advise (12) _____ to alternative browsers such as Firefox, Google Chrome or Opera.

Put the correct words from the table below in the above article.

1.	(a)	surfing	(b)	surf	(c)	surfers	(d)	surfs
2.	(a)	leave	(b)	leaving	(c)	leaves	(d)	leaver
3.	(a)	from	(b)	for	(c)	of	(d)	in
4.	(a)	couple	(b)	few	(c)	little	(d)	a lot
5.	(a)	trucks	(b)	tracks	(c)	tacks	(d)	tricks
6.	(a)	sizes	(b)	downsize	(c)	sizeable	(d)	size 12
7.	(a)	fixture	(b)	fix	(c)	fixing	(d)	fixed
8.	(a)	advising	(b)	advice	(c)	advisor	(d)	advises
9.	(a)	to	(b)	at	(c)	for	(d)	by
10.	(a)	bake	(b)	fake	(c)	take	(d)	make
11.	(a)	train	(b)	active	(c)	work out	(d)	exercise
12.	(a)	switches	(b)	switching	(c)	switched	(d)	switch

WRITING:

Write about **Internet browsers** for 10 minutes. Correct your partner's paper.

_____

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HOMEWORK

1. VOCABULARY EXTENSION: Choose several of the words from the text. Use a dictionary or Google's search field (or another search engine) to build up more associations / collocations of each word.

2. INTERNET: Search the Internet and find out more about the different browsers available. Share what you discover with your partner(s) in the next lesson.

3. HACKED: Make a poster about the dangers of the Internet. Provide advice on how to reduce these dangers. Show your work to your classmates in the next lesson. Did you all have similar things?

4. HIJACKED: Write a magazine article about someone whose life changed because their computer was hijacked. Include imaginary interviews with the person and the hacker.

Read what you wrote to your classmates in the next lesson. Write down any new words and expressions you hear from your partner(s).

5. LETTER: Write a letter to an Internet security expert. Ask him/her three questions about the Internet. Give him three suggestions on what he/she can do to make the Internet better. Read your letter to your partner(s) in your next lesson. Your partner(s) will answer your questions.

ANSWERS

TRUE / FALSE:

a. F   b. T   c. F   d. T   e. F   f. F   g. T   h. F

SYNONYM MATCH:

1.	surfing		a.	browsing
2	open		b.	exposed
3.	flaw		c.	fault
4.	confidential		d.	private
5.	sizeable		e.	big
6.	patch		f.	remedy
7.	measures		g.	actions
8.	monitor		h.	keep an eye on
9.	caution		i.	care
10.	alternative		j.	different

PHRASE MATCH:

1.	People surfing		a.	the web
2	The anti-virus software		b.	maker Trend Micro Inc.
3.	security holes like this are		c.	a goldmine for criminals
4.	The hackers then sell this for big money		d.	on the black market
5.	It is a sizeable		e.	problem
6.	creating an emergency software patch		f.	to fix the hole
7.	We will continue to monitor		g.	the threat
8.	take the appropriate action to		h.	protect our customers
9.	always exercise		i.	caution when browsing
10.	experts advise switching		j.	to alternative browsers

GAP FILL:

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Microsoft says it is investigating the flaw. Its website states that it is considering creating an **emergency** software patch to fix the hole. The company is advising users to try a complicated series of **measures** it calls "workarounds". Microsoft said: "We are **actively** investigating the vulnerability that these attacks attempt to exploit. We will continue to **monitor** the threat." The software giant assured people that it would "take the appropriate action to **protect** our customers". A Microsoft anti-virus blog said 0.2% of computer users may be **affected**. Its advice was to "always exercise caution when browsing and try to go to sites that you **trust**". Other experts advise switching to **alternative** browsers such as Firefox, Google Chrome or Opera.

LANGUAGE WORK

1 - a   2 - c   3 - d   4 - b   5 - d   6 - c   7 - b   8 - a   9 -a   10 - c   11 - d   12 - b