

Tip of the Week – Malware by Java

I have often been asked *Should I install the Java update?* In the past I have always answered Yes but now I have recently discovered that there are a large number of exploits which use a weakness in Java to infect computers. For this reason I suggest that you remove Java from all of your computers.

Let's look at this in detail.

What is an Exploit?

A computer exploit is anything which harms you or your computer. This can be as simple as finding a way to install a virus on your computer right through to a full-blown identity-theft attack.

Often, particularly if the attacker is skilful, you will not notice that your computer has been attacked. This makes it all the more important that you take preventative action to ensure, as far as possible, that you are not the victim of an attack.

More and more exploits use Java to attack your computer. The result of this is that Oracle, the company which now owns Java, is coming under increasing pressure to make Java more secure. This sort of pressure was applied to Microsoft some two decades ago over its cavalier attitude to writing secure programs and it has taken all that time before Microsoft started writing secure programs.

Please don't hold your breath waiting for Oracle to start writing secure versions of Java!

What is Java?

Java is a programming language. It is used by all sorts of devices including your computer. There are a number of programs which use Java to perform all sorts of actions.

The main problem is your web browser. For most people this is Internet Explorer, which is Microsoft's web browser. This, unfortunately, is also the browser which is most often the way that an attacker will get control of your computer. However it is not the only way. The other browsers are all much better than Internet Explorer (the program with the big blue "E" as its icon). My favourite web browser is Opera, and Chrome and Firefox are excellent alternatives to Microsoft's Internet Explorer.

If you are not using any of the alternative browsers I suggest that you try at least one of them.

How to Control Java

There are two ways to stop attackers from using Java, and the best method depends on the current state of your computer and your skill at using it.

Open *Control Panel* to check if your computer has Java installed. If Java is installed and you are viewing *Control Panel* either by *Small Icons* or by *Large Icons* you will find Java as a control panel icon. Double-click on this icon to open the Java Control Panel (shown at right).

If there is no Java control panel icon then you do not have Java on your computer so you can relax. There is no need to do anything else.

If you do have Java on your computer you will need to ensure that you are using the latest version. To check,



click on the *Update* tab of the Java Control Panel then click on *Update Now*. This will either confirm that you are using the latest version of Java or help you to update to the latest version. This is shown at right.

Once you have reached this stage please take one of the following steps.

Disable Java

As you have the Java Control Panel open the easiest way to control Java is to click on the *Security* tab and remove the check mark next to *Enable Java content in the browser* then click OK. This stops your web browser (Internet Explorer or one of the better ones) from running Java from the websites which you visit.

This is all that you need to do.

Uninstall Java

If you are worried that having Java on your computer could be risky then you can use the *Programs and Features* control panel to remove Java from your computer. Just open this control panel, click on *Java* then click on *Uninstall*. This will remove Java from your computer.

Another way to remove Java (or any other program) is to use a specialised uninstall program. My favourite uninstaller is *Revo Uninstaller*. This program comes in two flavours: Free and Pro. I use the free version because it is so much better than the Windows uninstaller which leaves too many fragments of a program behind. Download and install Revo Uninstaller then use it to uninstall Java.

Take Advantage of the Internet

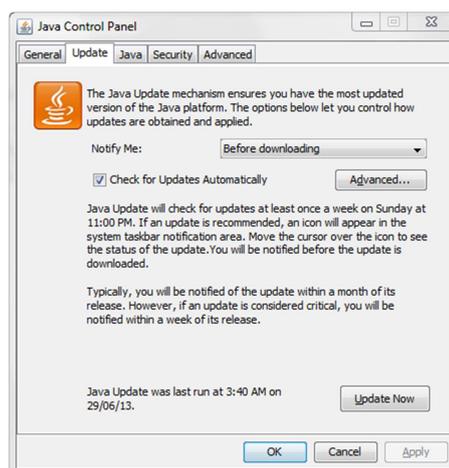
The internet is a treasure-trove of useful information and that is what I am talking about now. There are two useful types of websites which may be of use to you. The first type helps you get a project up and running using money sourced from other people; an example of this sort of website is *Kickstarter*. The second type of website is one which can help you run an event; an example of this sort of website is *Eventbrite*.

Crowd funding

Kickstarter is one of many *crowd funding* websites. Crowd funding is the process of asking people for money to complete a project and hope that there will be those people who think that your project is so good that they will send you part of the money that you ask for.

There are more crowd funding websites than I had imagined so this obviously means that many people are using this means of getting the funding to start their project. This is a need, and it appears that more traditional methods of funding projects are in danger of being moved to the sidelines as more and more people use websites like *Kickstarter*.

There are, of course, a number of websites which do crowd funding. There are so many, in fact, that my eyes started to blur when I did just five minutes of searching. If you are more persistent you may find just the right source of money for your project. Have you got a project that you would like to get started but you don't have the funds? This could well be your chance!



Event registration

There are many events going on at the moment. There are about as many headaches running an event as there are events, if not more! Some headaches are unavoidable but there is one which can, and has, driven people mad: selling tickets!

This is an essential activity: no tickets equals no event. One organisation that I know put on a bike ride and tried to sell tickets by phone and mail. This was a disaster! Getting people to send cheques (does anyone still use cheques?) was bad enough but letting them put money into the organisation's bank account was, if anything, even worse. There was money which appeared with no idea who had sent it so there could be no matching between competitors and income.

A disaster waiting to happen, but it only cost the organisation time and money.

If they had used a website like Eventbrite then all of this could have been avoided. There are many crowd funding websites but only a few that make events easier to manage. Eventbrite is one of these. It has all the tools you need to keep track of participants and money, thus saving you time and angst.

If you are thinking of running an event please check out Eventbrite for your next event.

Further Information

Java	www.java.com
Opera	www.opera.com
Firefox	www.mozilla.org
Chrome	www.google.com/chrome
Revo Uninstaller	www.revouninstaller.com
Kickstarter	www.kickstarter.com
Eventbrite	www.eventbrite.com.au