

## Re: Macs in Astronomy Updated; Canon 20D under Mac & Windows

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*From:* Chris L Peterson (*clp\_at\_alumni.caltech.edu*)

*Date:* 03/01/05

Date: Tue, 01 Mar 2005 20:57:35 GMT

On Tue, 01 Mar 2005 15:36:45 -0500, Davoud <star@sky.net> wrote:

>Davoud:

>> > *Why should someone have to "know how to configure" a personal computer*

>> > *to make it secure?*

I agree, it is best that security not depend on manual configuration. Certainly, the Mac installations have been better in this regard, although Windows is catching up quickly. My point was that this says nothing about the operating system itself, and everything about the operating system deployment method. OS X and Linux installations have been way ahead in that respect for a long time. But a properly configured Windows installation is no more vulnerable than OS X or Linux.

>Chris Peterson wrote *"There have been OS X viruses..."* to which I  
>replied *"Please name one OS X virus, and name one individual or academy  
>or industrial site that was affected by it."*

>

>*I'm still waiting. And I'll add to that one security breach or one  
>piece of spyware.*

I didn't respond because I don't consider the lack of viruses on Macs to be significant, given how trivial they are to avoid on PCs. I do believe that the lack has much more to do with the small market share of Macs than anything else, but that is arguable (and I'm not inclined to argue it beyond that). There have been a number of OS X vulnerabilities identified, and in most cases corrected. Just because nobody exploited them doesn't mean those vulnerabilities weren't there. How is it different from a Windows vulnerability being identified and corrected before it is exploited?

Last year, there was the Opener script, an OS X malware script that deletes some system files, opens the firewall, and installs a backdoor. I recall getting a security notice about it from Apple. I think it infected some machines in the wild, although never became a serious

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problem.

There have also been several benign proof-of-concept viruses and trojans posted over the last couple of years that demonstrate ways of exploiting OS X, although as far as I know none have been made malicious (or the vulnerabilities, once identified, have been fixed).

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