

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

Source: <http://sci.tech-archive.net/Archive/sci.astro.amateur/2005-03/0230.html>

From: Davoud (*star_at_sky.net*)

Date: 03/01/05

Date: Tue, 01 Mar 2005 17:21:53 -0500

Davoud:

> >> > *Why should someone have to "know how to configure" a personal computer
> >> > to make it secure?*

Chris L Peterson:

> *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.*

Maybe you do get it just a little bit. But it still turns back to "a properly configured Windows installation." There's got to be something fundamentally wrong when millions of computers under the control of expert IT managers are improperly configured, allowing destructive viruses and malware to install themselves. You say that it's not the fault of the OS, it's the fault of users who don't know how to configure the OS -- IT professionals and grandmas alike, with you being the sole exception, the world's only Windows user who deploys no defensive software, yet has never encountered malware. I say there's something wrong with the OS. If 100 million or so drivers wrecked their Henry J's because the steering wheels repeatedly fell off would you say it was the drivers' fault for not knowing how to drive without a steering wheel!? (I ask myself how many times that would happen to me before I quit driving Henry J's. The answer is "Once." Maybe that's why MSN -- the Microsoft Network -- reported "Mac users outsmart PC users" <http://msn.com.com/2100-9584_22-943557.html>;>) !

> > *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.*

> *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
> problem.*

Think again. The Opener script never became a problem at all because
not a single Mac --- I know that you're a skilled mathematician, but
let me reiterate --- _not one Mac_ in the wild was infected.

> *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).*

I'm going in circles again. The number of PC viruses passed the 100,000
mark in 2004 <<http://news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/technology/4105007.stm>> (it
turns out that the old ones don't go away when new ones appear!) None
of these was a "proof of concept" virus. It's people who rely on
Windows, not rabid maqueros like me, who say that these viruses are
instead proof of a fundamentally flawed OS. My circle leads me back to
the fact that _not a single one_ of those viruses (see my math paper
above) affected the Mac OS.

Davoud