

PC VIRUS LISTING

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It is difficult to name, identify and classify PC viruses. Everyone who first discovers a virus will name it and describe what they think of it. In most cases, the virus is not new and has been named and described dozens of times before. None of the names and few of the descriptions will match. While I'm writing this, for example, I feel certain that someone, somewhere has just been infected by the Jerusalem virus and they are telling their co-workers and friends about it as if it were newborn - and for them perhaps it is. It will be impossible to verify the strain and variety of the infection, however, unless we can get a living sample of the virus to analyze and compare with other strains of this same virus. So problem number one is filtering the reports of infection and collecting samples that can be placed under the knife.

Problem number two is - where do you draw the line between an original virus and a true variation of the virus? The original Brain virus, for example, could only infect a floppy diskette. Do the varieties of the Brain that can infect hard disks (but in every other respect are identical) deserve to be called new viruses, or are they still the Brain? What about further modifications that destroy data? Is this now a new virus? What if someone extracts a segment of the Brain code and uses it as a basis for a new virus? What if nothing changes but the imbedded text data, so that the virus is in every way functionally identical, but the volume label changes to "SMURF" instead of BRAIN. All of these modifications to the Brain have been discovered and logged. How do we deal with them?

I choose to deal with these modifications in the simplest way I know. If the virus differs in any way from the original (assuming that the "original" can in fact be identified), then I log it as a new strain. This relieves me from having to make decisions. Those of you who see the world differently can merely

take this listing and lump together all of the different strains that you like. That way we'll all be happy.

This will be, by the way, my last virus document. I have worked double time for the past eighteen months helping John McAfee and his Homebase folks and, while I have thoroughly enjoyed myself, I have finally burned out. It has been great fun and I've learned a lot, and hopefully some of my works, like the product review with Sankary and Marsh, will end up being somehow useful to the world. But now I have the irresistible urge to go fishing, and, perhaps afterwards, to contemplate my navel for a few years. In-between times I intend to write a book on the craziness in this industry and about the unique personalities I've had the pleasure to work with in the Virus Marine Corps. It's been quite an adventure. Thank you all.

Jim Goodwin From the Homebase BBS 408 988 4004

THE VIRUSES

I have arranged these viruses so that similar varieties are described in the sequence in which they appeared within the virus sub-group (to the best of my knowledge). Not everyone agrees with my groupings. Many people believe, for instance, that the Golden Gate-C (Mazatlan Virus) is a distinctly original virus and is not a variation of the Alameda. I think differently and have endeavored to show how the Golden Gate evolved from the Alameda, through each precursor virus. I cannot prove, of course, that the sequence of appearances is the correct sequence, and in many cases I have had to guess. If anyone wishes to re-order these virus, I will not be offended.

I have not included any of the specific application trojans in this list. There has been a lot of discussion about the Lotus 123 and DBASE "viruses", for example. These are not replicating programs and I do not classify them as viruses. I had originally intended a separate list to include these non-replicating trojans but Time caught up with me.

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