

THE HISTORY OF COMPUTER VIRUSES

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Computer worms developed as benevolent creations.

Modern-day worms come from a benevolent creation of engineers at Xerox Palo Alto Research Center. In 1979, engineers created a worm program to look for idle processors on a network and utilize them for more efficient computer use. Unfortunately, this became the precursor to modern worms, which corrupt files and computers.

The Creeper infected ARPANET in the early 70s.

ARPANET was the predecessor to the Internet. In 1971, Bob Thomas wrote The Creeper as an experimental self-replicating program. The Creeper was designed to access and copy itself to remote computers, and The Reaper was designed to hunt down and destroy The Creeper, making it the first anti-virus program.

The first Apple virus appeared in 1982.

The first Apple virus was written by a high-school student as a joke in 1982. This virus was called "Elk Cloner." The virus attacked the Apple DOS operating system, and it spread via floppy disk. The virus made computers display a poem after the fiftieth time playing a game, and that's how you knew the computer was infected.

The first PC virus arrived in 1986.

"The Brain" is arguably the first real computer virus to hit IBM PC users in the mid-1980s. In 1986, Pakistani programmers unleashed "The Brain," which was a virus that attacked the boot sector.

The first worm spread in 1988.

In 1988, a young programmer named Robert Morris created a worm designed to infect ARPANET computers. This worm hunted down computers on the network and flooded them with copies of itself, disabling nearly 6,000 computers on the network.

Macro viruses began to evolve.

When the Windows operating system came out, a new computer virus category wasn't far behind. These weren't the old boot sector viruses, though, or even worms; with the introduction of Windows, macro viruses were born. In 1995, Concept emerged as the first macro virus, and it infected Microsoft Word documents. Concept heralded a new chapter in viruses-viruses that could spread whenever a user opened a document.

Viruses infected government systems.

With all the viruses attacking private systems, it wasn't long before something came along specifically aimed at government sectors. Solar Sunrise was the first virus to infect the Sun Solaris operating system, and it successfully infiltrated more than 500 government and military computers. Solar Sunrise was actually created by a few teenagers in California, but the government worried about the potential of hostile computer attacks.

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1999 heralded the modern age of virus awareness.

In 1999, the "Melissa" computer virus attacked thousands of computers and caused nearly \$80 million in damage. Melissa is the virus responsible for widespread knowledge of and worries about computer virus protection. With the advent of Melissa, computer virus protection programs reached record sales.

Consumers brace for the new computer virus onslaught.

Starting in 2000, worries about computer viruses have been an annual occurrence, and they pose a daily issue for millions of computer users. Viruses like the "I Love You" virus, DDOS, the Code Red worm and an endless succession of ongoing viruses continue to attack computer users in all sectors. Utilizing computer virus protection in the modern age is vital, so make sure you're using a good anti-virus program with up-to-date definitions to protect your system. Remember you can get free antivirus download links and recommendations from www.discountgeeks.com.

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