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Worm Uses Webcams to Spy on Users  
By [Sharon Gaudin](#)  
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A new variant of the Rbot worm has the ability to take over users' webcams and use them to spy on people in their offices and homes.

Rbot-GR is not widely spread at this point but at least one analyst says it may be the first wave for a new type of malware.

"It's a little bit creepy," says Graham Cluley, senior technology consultant for Sophos Inc., an anti-virus software company based in Lynnfield, Mass.

"People are used to the idea of worms spreading and collecting data from their hard drive... Obviously, this could be used for industrial espionage but more likely it's being done because it's possible. If I infect 1,000 computers, maybe there would be one or two where there's something really interesting to watch.

"It's akin to having a closed circuit television camera in your house," he adds.

The Rbot-GR worm spreads via network shares, exploiting a number of Microsoft security vulnerabilities, installing a backdoor Trojan horse as it travels. The worm specifically looks for computers that already have been infected with the MyDoom worm.

Once installed on an infected computer, remote hackers can easily gain access to the information on the PC's hard drive and steal passwords, as well as spy on innocent users via their webcam and microphone.

Cluley says this worm is evidence of a growing trend of more and more malware spying on innocent home computer owners and businesses that are lax in protecting their networks.

"It's just a taste of things to come," says Cluley. "I wouldn't be surprised if virus writers don't drop this code into future worms. They'll get a subversive kick out of it. They might want to see what's going on in people's bedrooms and people's offices. If you have webcam and your computer gets hacked, you need to realize that your webcam is in jeopardy."

Cluley says he's concerned about all the people who installed a webcam and then forgot they have it.

"One of the dangers is that when you buy a computer, it will come bundled with a webcam," he explains. "They might plug it in and then they realize that the telephone is easier to use. And they forget about it. You might forget that it's even plugged in there. If you're not using it, just unplug it."



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