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VIRUS ALERT!

Sober.Q - A Horror Story

Q: "This morning I found 15 German emails in my inbox. I don't know what they say, but each email has a file attached to it. Do I have a virus?"

Those email attachments are infected with the Sober virus. If you've opened the attachment, then you are infected with Sober.Q.

The tale of the Sober virus reads more like the teaser for Stephen King's next horror novel than a computer story. It is the saga of an evil genius who uses a previously mutated incarnation and an army of worm-infested zombies to bring his newest creation to life and spread his warped nightmare to millions around the world.

As a virus, Sober has had an extraordinary life span. It started off in 2003 as a minor irritation in Germany and has evolved through seventeen variations in the past two years. Sober.Q is a massive spam campaign – written in German – with links to various right-wing and Neo Nazi news articles on the web. In addition to hate propaganda, Sober.Q also includes a viral email attachment. If that attachment is opened, your system will be turned into a "Zombie" – a quaint pet name for a PC that is under the control of (and does the bidding for) a virus or a hacker. Not only will your anti-virus program be knocked out, but your loveable computer will be thoroughly ransacked for email addresses of friends, neighbors and acquaintances who will then be sent their very own email copy of this devious monstrosity.

Oh, it gets better ...

Once your system is infected with Sober.Q, it is now ready to receive and distribute future versions of Sober automatically. The "Q" version was distributed to over 10 million email inboxes recently because thousands of running computers were already infected with an earlier Sober version. These "Zombie" computers received the newest version and immediately forwarded it to millions of others.

A Sober Defense:

"Computers: If they're not protected, they're infected.

Email attachments: If it's unexpected, it's infected "

Never open an unexpected email attachment, even from a friend. Send it back and ask for verification. If your computer is not protected with a good up-to-date virus scanner, then you are unprotected and prone to virus infections.

As a final note, we certainly have not seen the last of the Sober Virus. Make sure you are well protected, don't open unexpected email attachments and beware of Zombies bearing gifts!

Have a question for your Computer Doctor?

Call me at (602) 861-1738 or email your questions to john@helpmedoc.com