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Sunday December 4, 10:02 AM

Scientists develop new software to beat computer viruses

By Indo Asian News Service

London, Dec 4 (IANS) The irritating computer viruses could be beaten in their own game by immunity software that spreads faster than the virus itself, says a team of computer experts from Israel.

Their proposal relies on setting up a network of shortcuts through the Internet that only antiviral programmes can use, allowing them to immunize computers before a virus arrives, according to a paper published in this month's edition of Nature Physics.

Currently available anti-virus software aims to stop attacks on healthy computers and to clean up those already infected. Teams work around the clock to look for new viruses and build software 'patches'.

These patches are distributed to computer users to install on their machines, hopefully before the virus arrives. But the strategy means that some viruses stay one step ahead for days, before they spread.

'The software companies just regard the Internet as a sophisticated FedEx service,' said Tel Aviv University, the lead author of the paper.

'Our focus is to immunise the whole network, not to clean individual computers or fix v

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broken,' he was quoted as saying on the web edition of Nature.

The strategy, in other words, intends to use the malicious code's own techniques to distri

In the paper, titled 'Distributive immunisation of networks against viruses using t architecture', authors have made a proposal 'to propagate the immunisation agent as an

'The main problem with epidemic vaccine propagation is that it is bound to lag behind suggest giving the vaccine an advantage over the virus by allowing it to leapfrog throu overlapping and partially correlated network. This enables the anti-virus to contain efficiently.'

Shir and his colleagues have proposed a system in which a few 'honeypot' computers viruses. These computers run automated software that first identifies the virus and the 'signature' across the Internet.

This enables a sentinel programme on all other computers in the network to identify the before it can attack them.

The real trick is to make sure that the antiviral signature travels faster through the In virus itself, so that whenever a malicious programme arrives it finds a sentinel blocking th

'You need to build extra links into the network that only the immune agent can use,' says

These extra links would form a parallel network connecting the honeypot computers. Ass shortcuts can be set up and made secure, the anti-viral signature should be able to ahead.

Shir did not have any plans to commercialise the idea and hoped that the scheme woul an open-source project, freely available to all computer users who want to get involved.

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