

SIGN IN

{* SOFTWARE *}

MS to force IT-security censorship

Creating, then throttling, security 'partners'

Thomas C Greene

Fri 2 Nov 2001 // 04:43 UTC



EXCLUSIVE: We all know how Microsoft likes to bully its many 'partners', so it comes as no surprise that the Beast has decided to apply its partnership muscle to silence the software and network security research community.

The company is currently shopping a 'security partnership agreement', which would open up reams of MS vulnerability data to those firms which capitulate to its censorship demands while leaving all others out in the cold, *The Register* has learned.

Terms of the partnership agreement include provisions which would enjoin partners from releasing 'detailed' vulnerability data over a 'blackout' period. Our information is in conflict here; we've heard that the blackout could be 45 days, a la CERT, or as long as six months, or indefinitely, until a fix is developed.

It's likely that several drafts of the agreement are in circulation, and this uncertainty indicates the minimum and maximum periods currently under consideration.

The word 'detailed' is still being debated, we gather. But we can guess that the sanitized reports MS itself likes to publish to accompany its patches would provide the model. Full disclosure would be enjoined until the Beast manages to issue a fix; and it appears that the agreement would give the company as long as it likes to develop one. Its security partners would be expected to keep silent, or issue a well-scrubbed, sanitized advisory in the mean time.

Just as we saw MS pressuring its partners to **rat on** system builders who

request quotes on OS-less 'naked' boxes with a bribery scheme, we can expect similar shenanigans to ferret out rogue security vendors which dare defy the Redmond Censors and actually offer their customers useful information.

Redmond's goal is to ensure forcibly that exploit code doesn't fall into the hands of the blackhat development community before they've got a fix, but it also means that security vendors won't be able to give their customers the means to develop a workaround or a fix to an existing vulnerability until Redmond gets off its ass and solves the problem.

The problem here is obvious: if millions of systems are vulnerable to attack, it's pure head-in-the-sand gambling to hope that none of them will be exploited during the time it takes Redmond to sort it all out.

Frankly, if I were paying good money for security services, I'd feel cheated if my vendor withheld data which I might be able to use to protect myself from attack. I wouldn't consider that a service worth paying for. I would do business with security vendors who wouldn't withhold crucial information from me on Microsoft's behest.

Worse, we have here a recipe for establishing a monopoly on vulnerability data like the little cabal of greedy insiders who run the anti-virus industry, and who control access to information with a stranglehold which protects nothing so much as their revenue stream.

Spin Session

It's likely that MS will announce this appalling scheme formally during its Trusted Computing Forum in Mountain View, California on 6, 7 and 8 November.

The forum "will bring together leaders of the online community to address some of the most pressing privacy and security issues we face today," the company says.

And of course, it's all part of Microsoft's touching tradition of selfless public service: "The need for a forum such as this is greater than ever. The tragic events of September 11, 2001 have made an undeniable impact on the industry and the world with regards to privacy and security concerns," we're told.

And who's been invited to speak? Richard Clarke, Presidential Advisor for Cyber Security; Brian Arbogast, Vice President of Microsoft's .NET Core Platform Services; Craig Mundie, MS Chief Technology Officer; Mozelle Thompson, Commissioner, Federal Trade Commission; Stewart Baker, Partner, Steptoe and Johnson & former General Counsel, National Security Agency; Jerry Berman, Executive Director, Center for Democracy and Technology; Rebecca Cohn, member of the California State Assembly; Lt. Lenley Duncan, Commander California Highway Patrol Network Management Section; and Barry Steinhardt, Associate Director of the ACLU.

Rather a significant stacking of collaborators over skeptics, we must observe.

If anyone mistook MS Security Manager Scott Culp's [recent essay](#) denouncing full-disclosure proponents as 'information anarchists' for some simple, earnest opinion piece, they can dispense with that illusion.

The essay was a mere shot across the bow in preparation for the real assault, which we predict will ultimately include some RIAA-like lobbying consortium to enforce Redmond's will upon the security community.

Unless, of course, the security research community has the spine to defy the Beast, an outcome we'd like to see, but which we wouldn't bet good money on. Though if anyone wants to step up and prove us wrong, we'll be the first to applaud. ®

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Leaked: List of police, govt, uni orgs in Clearview AI's facial-recognition trials

Plus: Mortgage algorithm bias, and an AI-guided play comes to London

Katyanna Quach Sun 29 Aug 2021 // 09:48 UTC



IN BRIEF Clearview AI's controversial facial-recognition system has been trialed, at least, by police, government agencies, and universities around the world, according to newly leaked files.

Internal documents revealed by BuzzFeed News show that Clearview offered its technology to law enforcement agencies, governments, and academic institutions in 24 countries, including the UK, Brazil, and Saudi Arabia, on a try-before-you-buy basis.

The facial-recognition biz scraped billions of photos from public social media profiles, including Instagram and Facebook, and put them all into a massive database. Clearview's customers can submit pictures of people and the system will automatically try to locate those people in the database, using facial recognition, and return any details picked up from their personal pages if successful. Thus, the police can, for example, give

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Real world not giving you enough anxiety? Try being hunted down by the perfect organism in *Alien: Isolation*

2014 stealth-em-up hasn't aged a day

Richard Currie Sat 28 Aug 2021 // 10:37 UTC



THE RPG *Greetings, traveller, and welcome back to The Register Plays Games, our monthly gaming column. Not that anybody noticed but we skipped the last edition for a number of reasons. 1) Too many betas. Though we were monitoring developments in potential World of Warcraft killer New World and Left 4 Dead's spiritual successor, Back 4 Blood, we didn't see anything that could be discussed fairly. 2) Generally no new full releases of interest. 3) We had to RMA a graphics card and got sad. However, when setting out **the vision for this column**, there were no hard and fast rules about what got covered. So this time we're headed back to 2014 and a crumbling space station where something extremely violent and dangerous lurks in the shadows...*

I own two copies of *Alien: Isolation*. The first was bought on disc for the Xbox One at release seven years ago. At this point I had never truly committed to a "survival horror" simply because, while horror films and literature are great, horror games are another kettle of fish.

The flicking of pages and glow from the big screen are gentle reminders

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Et tu, Samsung? Electronics giant accused of quietly switching SSD components

Squirrelly semiconductor swaps make performance difficult to predict

Thomas Claburn in San Francisco Sat 28 Aug 2021 // 08:08 UTC

42 

Samsung has altered the parts used to make its 970 EVO Plus 1TB SSD card, leading a version manufactured in June 2021 to perform differently than an older formulation from April 2021.

In a video posted to the channel YouTube channel 潮玩客 ("Trendy Player"), Chinese video blogger Jian Ge recently compared two versions of the product – one from April labelled with part number MZVLB1T0HBLR and another from June labelled MZVL21T0HBLU – and found the performance characteristics have changed, some for the better and some for the worse.

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Microsoft warns of widespread open redirection phishing attack – which Defender can block, coincidentally

Some tactics never change much

Thomas Claburn in San Francisco Fri 27 Aug 2021 // 21:59 UTC

7 

Microsoft has warned that it has been tracking a widespread credential-phishing campaign that relies on open redirector links, while simultaneously suggesting it can defend against such schemes.

"Attackers combine these links with social engineering baits that impersonate well-known productivity tools and services to lure users into clicking," the company's Microsoft 365 Defender Threat Intelligence Team said in a blog post on Thursday.

"Doing so leads to a series of redirections – including a CAPTCHA

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Perseverance to take a second stab at Martian rocks ... but first it has to scratch'n'sniff

Hopefully this'll be the sample that eventually gets sent back to Earth

Katyanna Quach Fri 27 Aug 2021 // 20:56 UTC

6 

NASA's Perseverance rover will make a second attempt at collecting a sample of Mars rock for eventual return to Earth – though it's going to scratch its latest target first to make sure it's worth bothering.

The 1,025-kg, nuclear-powered trundlebot may be the most advanced vehicle to explore Mars yet, but it proved no match for some parts of the Red Planet's regolith. On its first sampling attempt, it bored a hole into a

patch of ground in the Jezero crater, but no material was bottled up, leaving the boffins baffled.

An analysis showed that the machine's software and hardware was operating flawlessly. There was nothing wrong with Perseverance, it's

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Microsoft does and doesn't want you to know it won't stop you manually installing Windows 11 on older PCs

Hardware requirements loophole left in

[Chris Williams, Editor in Chief](#) Fri 27 Aug 2021 // 20:25 UTC

52 

Microsoft doesn't want to say it publicly but it will not stop you manually installing Windows 11 on older or otherwise incompatible PCs.

The Redmond giant is under fire for the stringent hardware requirements of its upcoming operating system, due to be formally released by the end of the year.

To be officially supported by Windows 11, machines will need TPM 2.0 support; an eighth-generation or newer Intel Core processor, a Zen 2 or

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Dell, HP talk of backlogs and shortages as big PC-makers turn in their numbers

Dell's results were upbeat, HP's flat, but investors still worried over supply chain

[Jude Karabus](#) Fri 27 Aug 2021 // 19:05 UTC

2 

HP Inc and Dell both raised concerns over ongoing component shortages when they reported their July quarters yesterday, with the Palo Alto firm citing "unprecedented demand that is way ahead of supply right now" and Round Rock saying "demand was ahead of revenue growth as we managed supply constraints."

Dell's PC biz saw growth in its enterprise rather than consumer segment for its fiscal Q2, with revenue from its client-solutions group, which mainly sells PCs, up 27 per cent to \$14.3bn.

HP's PC results, by contrast, were flat, with its Personal Systems unit

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'Apps for GNOME' site aims to improve discovery of the project's best applications

A sprinkling of Rust and presto! A new multi-language web site appears

[Tim Anderson](#) Fri 27 Aug 2021 // 18:05 UTC

4 

The GNOME project has created Apps for GNOME, a website to "feature the best applications in the GNOME ecosystem," according to creator Sophie Herold.

The scope of the GNOME project is extensive and includes low-level

system components, a toolkit for developers of GUI applications (GTK), a desktop shell and window manager, and numerous applications built with these technologies.

GNOME apps fall into three categories. The first, called Core, are apps

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EU to formally probe Nvidia's \$54bn takeover over British chip designer Arm – report

Hot on heels of 'significant concerns' from the UK

Gareth Corfield Fri 27 Aug 2021 // 16:58 UTC

20 

Nvidia told *The Reg* it would work "with the European Commission to address any concerns they may have" after reports it is set open a formal competition law investigation into the AI firm's purchase of Arm from Softbank.

The *Financial Times* reported this morning that the political bloc will examine whether or not the \$54bn takeover deal will result in reduced competition between the world's leading chip designers.

"The investigation is likely to begin after Nvidia officially notifies the European Commission of its plan to acquire Arm," said the UK financial

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Slap on wrist for NCC Group over CREST exam-cheating scandal as infosec org agrees to rewrite NDAs and more

Two 'historic' incidents nearly a decade ago, says statement

Gareth Corfield Fri 27 Aug 2021 // 15:55 UTC

4 

British infosec firm NCC Group has been rapped over the knuckles after infosec accreditation body CREST found it was "vicariously responsible" for employees who helped staff cheat certification exams.

In a lengthy statement published yesterday, CREST said last summer's exam-cheating scandal boiled down to just two incidents carried out between the years 2012 and 2014.

"On two occasions between 2012 and 2014, the examination-related activities of one of more NCC Group employees and candidates

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This way up: James Webb Space Telescope gets ready for shipment after final tests

Next stop, Kourou

Richard Speed Fri 27 Aug 2021 // 14:30 UTC

21 

It's been a big week for the much-delayed James Webb Space Telescope (JWST) as testing of the observatory was completed and operations to

ship the spacecraft to the Kourou launchpad began.

It has been a long time coming – the best part of 25 years since development started – but it looks very much the JWST will finally head to space this year.

A poster child for cost overruns, the JWST is a joint NASA, ESA and CSA project and will make observations in a lower frequency range than the

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