

What this stack is for

This stack eliminates script based viruses which spread themselves by appending the scripts of other stacks with additional instructions which in turn infects every stack they come in contact with. The original virus of this ilk is called “merryxmas.”

merryxmas Vaccine The Next Generation

Since the appearance of merryxmas, other strains have surfaced such as merry2xmas, Lopez and others too crude to mention. Version 2.0 of this stack is a new, broad spectrum vaccine that catches them all.

What the virus does

By design, these viruses are intended only to replicate themselves in other stacks. The worst they are intended to do is quit (not crash) HyperCard unexpectedly. An unintended problem is that portions of other scripts get sucked into the virus script. The results can be confusing and frustrating.

Requirements

This stack requires HyperCard v2.1 or later. This is to handle System 7 aliases. System 7 is not required. Color monitors (optional) will display “status colors.”

If you use a compression utility such as AutoDoubler, be sure to have adequate free space on the volume being checked. Stacks have a way of expanding as they are being examined.

This stack needs to run unlocked in order to display it's findings. Always keep a master copy of this stack locked.

What this stack will do

For a selected stack, folder or entire volume, this stack will peek at the stack scripts (without opening the stacks); and strip out the virus code.

A bonus feature is the option to let it compact those stacks that have free space available for compacting. Don't worry about locked stacks—this stack will unlock them as needed and relock them.

NEW in v2.0

This stack will also offer to lock the Home stack against future infections. This is the same as checking the “Locked” checkbox in the Get Info window and can be unlocked at any time by clicking once on the icon of the Home stack; choosing Get Info from the File menu; then unchecking the checkbox.

How to use this stack

Step 1. If you know, or suspect that the Home stack is infected, it is a

good idea to replace it with a copy from your original disk first.
Step 2. Make a copy of this stack if you have not already done so.

(Make sure the original is locked and the copy is unlocked.)

Step 3. Open the unlocked copy and click the "Disinfect Stacks" button.

Step 4. Select the stack, folder or volume (disk) you wish to disinfect.

To take this stack out for a dry run first, use it to scan a floppy disk.
Locked volumes will be scanned without making changes.

NEW in v2.0

Stacks that have been saved as standalone applications (self contained stacks that do not need the HyperCard program in order to open) can now be checked for viruses. While an infected application cannot be disinfected, it can at least be checked. To take advantage of this new feature, click the "Check Application" button.

The scripts

The code is based on a copy of an infected stack brought to my attention by Ken Dunham at LaGrande Middle School. It was developed on my own time, at home, for use in the public domain.

Soapbox

Viruses are unworthy creations for such clever and talented people. It is my hope that the author of the merryxmas virus will realize the destructive impact that pranks like this have in terms of lost time & productivity and finds inspiration for more constructive contributions.

Copypat virus spreaders on the other hand are neither clever nor talented. They are small minded trouble makers, low on the food chain.

BillSwagerty
AOL: Bill DS
Internet: bill_swagerty@claris.com

Acknowledgements & Version History

Version 2.0

- Jacques Gay, AOL for ideas on broader detection and protection techniques.
- Ralph Gross, Batavia Middle School for isolating additional virus strains.
- Abandoned attempts at inoculating the Home stack in favor of locking it.
- Added provision for scanning standalone stack applications.

Version 1.5

- Dennis Kane for pointing out an illegal use of a reserved word.
- Added an option to inoculate the Home stack against future infections.
- Made the color indicator move with the card when the window is moved.
- Added a button for printing the activity report at the end of a scan.
- Added a musical completion notice.

Version 1.4

- Ronald Zellner, Texas A&M University for more comprehensive inoculation strings and for pointing out the virus' function typo. Good eye Ron!
- Added provision for scanning an individual stack or folder.
- Enhanced to display colors on monitors set for more than 256 colors.

Version 1.3

- To accommodate accidental mutations, the vaccine now removes everything from the virus code on down from the stack script of infected stacks.
- Stacks are assumed to be Finder locked if IsFinderLocked fails.

Version 1.2

- Mark Johnson for pointing out GetDir's weakness for names with commas.
- Indicator light left red if one or more stacks could not be disinfected.

Version 1.1

- Accommodated the way Mac Pluses respond to the MonitorConfig XFCN.

Version 1.0

- Ken Dunham; LaGrande Middle School; 1108 4th St; La Grande OR 97850 (503) 963-1954 for bringing the virus to my attention.
- Bill Marriott for the straight HyperTalk progress bar as featured in the Claris TechInfo Journal / Winter 1993.