

## Bad Google

Don't get me wrong, I love my google... the search engine, email, cloud storage. But now I must take pause, and take issue with Google the Company. They have done something that I can only describe as a **cheap shot**.

What may seem noble and righteous to one may be the devil's work to the other. The crux of the matter is this: if a software flaw is found, does the general public have a right to know, or should the flaw be concealed until such time as a fix can be found and distributed? This may sound like "Big Brother" but I believe it should be concealed. I welcome other opinions, but first hear me out:

Here's what Google did: **they violated the first law of finding software bugs**. The software industry's commonly held (but not a legally binding) rule is: if you find a flaw or bug, you notify the software creator/publisher of the flaw. You then wait for a patch to be prepared and distributed, then you go public with the discovery.

This gives the creator / publisher some time to fix the bug, test the fix, and release the fix. It also gives anti-virus writers time to prepare definitions and antidotes. I feel the "publish after the fix" method protects users because 99.9% of computer users would not use the knowledge, nor care about it. But the 1% who are hackers do care very much. Some "pro hackers" find bugs on their own, and exploit them immediately, no warnings. But most hackers are not actually that good at finding bugs. They are, however adept at assembling "virus kits" made by others (see sidebar) into new viruses – the programming work is all done: they are just waiting to be handed a bug to exploit. **Now Google is handing them out like candy.**

### Sidebar:

Yes, there is a market for pre-programmed "virus kits". There's even a cloud-based virus server product from which to launch your newly assembled virus. The hackers who use these kits are neither smart nor sophisticated, and perhaps not worthy of the term "hacker" at all. The industry calls them "script kiddies" because many are young, and lack real talent, but are good at writing the scripts to assemble the virus kits.

This is why I take issue with Google: since last September, they have published several bugs in Windows and Office software prior to Microsoft being able to send out a fix. This is unconscionable to me – there are enough "pro" hackers already, so why arm the amateurs who merely assemble kits with "pro" information? That only increases the pool of hackers and number of attacks from one bug. Google acts all righteous and says they are "publishing before fix" to motivate Microsoft to move faster to fix bugs. Right. Perhaps that explanation works for them. I say don't do that... unless there is some other motivation? **Hmmm, what could it be?**

Perhaps it is because Microsoft is starting to put up some serious competition to Google. Microsoft's Office365 software is **rapidly becoming the largest and fastest selling software product, ever**. When you consider that Office365 may be eating the Google Apps lunch, then Google's motivations become a bit clearer.

-John Becker