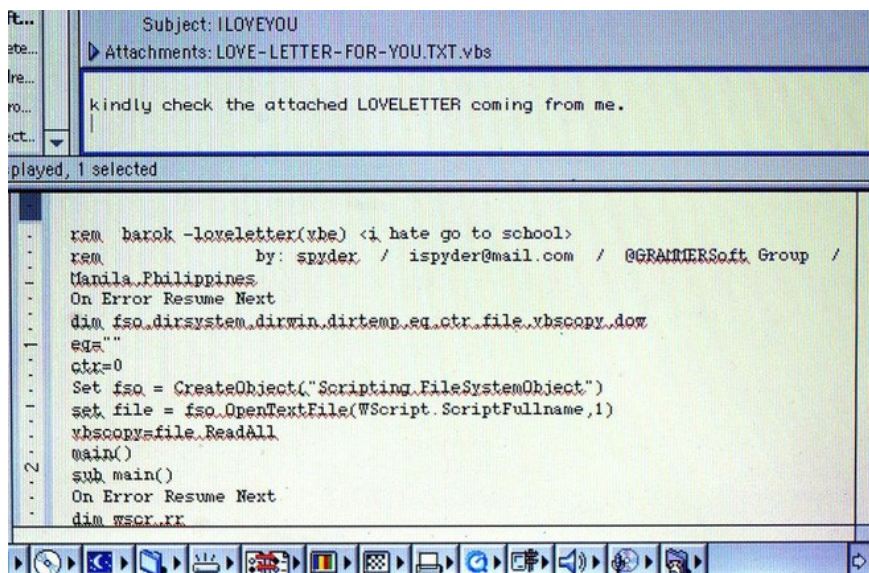


# Infecting 50 million computers in 10 days, how the ILOVEYOU worm caused the world's first computer virus pandemic

Today, 20 years ago, ILOVEYOU caused a global earthquake, no different from the current Covid-19 pandemic.

Twenty years ago, on May 4, 2000, Windows users began receiving an email containing a malicious file. Within 10 days later, about 50 million reports of this infection were reported and at that time, it was equivalent to 10% of computers connected to the internet worldwide. This malware is the virus with the lovely name ILOVEYOU.

But behind that sweet email is a malicious code with amazing destruction. It destroys the infected computer itself by overwriting certain types of files (including Office files, images, sounds). Not only that, it also copies itself and sends it to many other people in the computer contacts saved on Microsoft Outlook.



With such dangerous destructive power, it is not surprising that this computer virus has left a huge economic impact. The costs associated with removing this malware and recovering deleted files amounted to \$ 10 billion by the time things settled. Not to mention the billions of dollars in other losses of business and work that have stalled during this period.

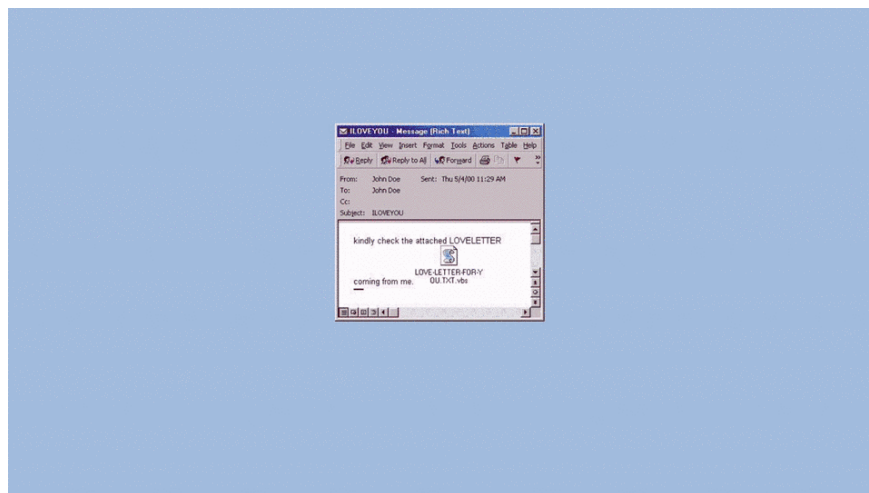
At that time, the news about ILOVEYOU was flooded with worldwide news. It was later realized that the spread and the terrible destructive power of this virus could be greatly reduced if the warnings of experts from many years ago were heeded. In comparison, the situation at that time was similar to that of the current Covid-19

pandemic.

And just as cities around the world are having to isolate or close down completely to prevent the spread of Covid-19, email servers or computer networks are also disabled to prevent ILOVEYOU from continuing to spread. Ian. Even the Pentagon, CIA, Microsoft and the British Parliament have to close their entire email system to deal with this incident.

## **ILOVEYOU becomes the first global computer virus pandemic**

Although often referred to as a computer virus, ILOVEYOU is essentially a "worm" of computers. The difference is that the virus will need a host - a "host file" - to trigger the infection and copies of that host file also need to be enabled on each computer to continue the infection. Meanwhile, computer worms can copy and replicate themselves by spreading their copies in the computer network without human intervention.

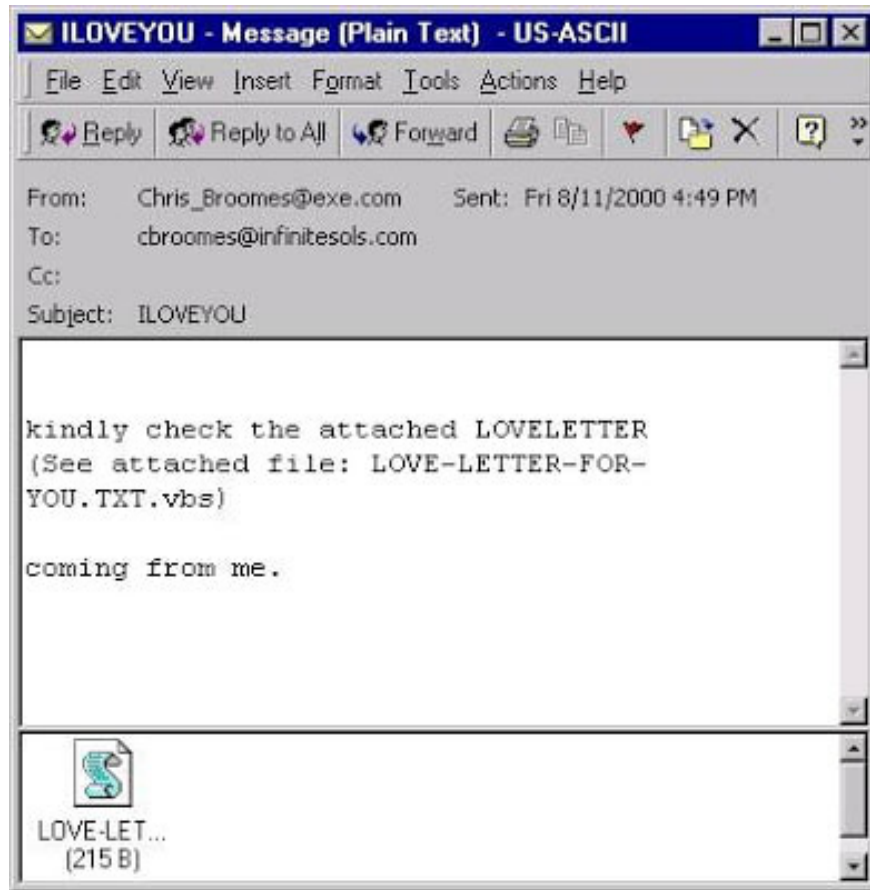


That makes ILOVEYOU particularly dangerous compared to other computer viruses. With a spam email originating from the Philippines on May 4, 2000, with the title as sweet as an ILOVEYOU love letter, it stimulated the recipient to open the letter and download the attached file. Just so, the ILOVEYOU worm will penetrate the computer and spread to any computer connected to the network. It also scans contacts saved in Microsoft Outlook Windows and automatically sends its copy to the people in it.

Although ILOVEYOU is not the first major virus outbreak, its size and impact indicate how dangerous email spam can be. ILOVEYOU is probably the first time an outbreak of a series of computer malware has been of interest to the media.

Colin Childs, senior security architect, Octopi Managed Services, said: "*I remember LOVE BUG (another name for the ILOVEYOU worm) as the first malware to be talked about. In Winnipeg then, on the first day of the outbreak. "And in the days that followed, many famous people on the radio discussed this new worm and it is causing problems globally ."*

Surprisingly, an advisory document issued by the Community Emergency Response Team (CERT) on September 22, 1989 - 11 years before ILOVEYOU outbreak - warned of the dangers of viruses and computer worms. can do, as well as advice to mitigate the impact - but obviously no one will pay attention to it until the computer worm outbreaks.

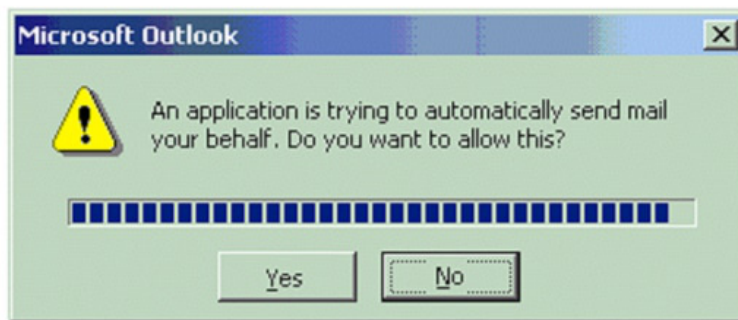
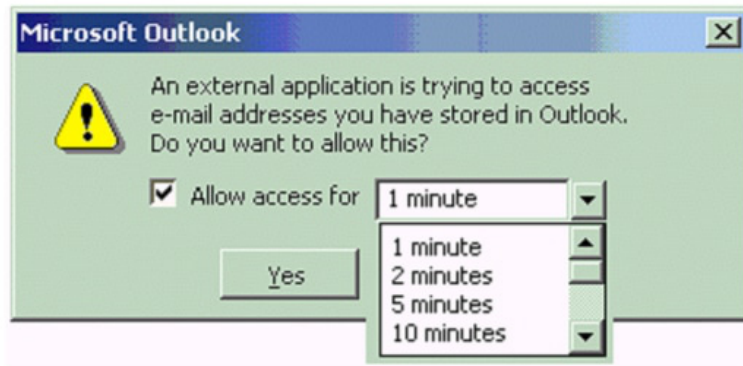


The email is sweet and dangerous.

### **ILOVEYOU makes a fundamental change in network security activities**

Childs said: " *For me, and many others in the field of information security, LOVE BUG is our first experience with malicious code and the impact it has on the world. It changes the way Our look to the internet, and mark the first time we have to be more careful every time we read an email or explore a website .* "

Network security and anti-virus software got a lot more attention after this period, and soon it became a must-have installation on Windows computers. Microsoft also has to patch holes in its popular email browser.



The automated features in Outlook were previously disabled, and it will send notifications to users when software wants to do this.

Many features that are automatically implemented as before, such as contact access, automatic email delivery, have been disabled. Instead, an alert will appear whenever an application wants to do so. The types of email attachments are also more restrictive, in order to prevent the spread of malicious code via email - in other words, for computers, now all emails coming through Outlook are untrusted and need to be kept separate from user data.

The author of ILOVEYOU worm, a Filipino named Onel de Guzman, an employee of a mobile phone repair shop in Manila. When discovered, he admitted to developing this malware to steal wifi passwords so that he could access the internet without paying.



Onel de Guzman, who caused the first worldwide computer virus pandemic.

However, de Guzman was never prosecuted because at that time in the Philippines, there was no law against writing and distributing malicious code. It was the ILOVEYOU outbreak that changed that. Two months after the outbreak of this computer worm, the National Assembly of the country issued the E-Commerce Law with provisions related to this behavior.

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