Mother Board

This Month At NOPC

Stump the Experts (?)

Confound our Club Guru's

Inside this issue:

What To Do When . . .
Your Browser Displays Script Error Warnings

by Rachel Derowitsch

Any error message you receive while online makes you sit up and take notice. Script errors are no exception. Without knowing the true nature of these errors, you may wonder if the Web site or email you're viewing is exposing you to a virus or loading unwanted cookies on your system.

Relax. It's not like that. In fact, as we'll explain, script errors may occur because of the tight protection you have on your system. Script errors are usually more of an unnecessary nuisance than a warning of impending danger. But because script errors are so common, you should know what causes them and what you can do to prevent them.

Sources Of Conflict

Script error warnings sometimes pop up while you're viewing a Web site using Internet Explorer or trying to read an email in a program such as Outlook Express 6.

December Presentation

Our meeting on December 6th will be different from our regular meetings. Instead of a speaker, a team of your fellow members will answer (or try like heck to answer) your questions about computer hardware, software and noware. Any question is welcome from basic to advanced. This meeting is the time to ask that question and harness the power not only of our team but of all the NOPCC members. If you want to insure your questions are addressed, call your question into our Hotline at 887-5746 or email Tom Ford at tomford@bellsouth.net. We will have the answer waiting for you at the meeting. And as an added bonus, the member with the best question will receive a $50 gift certificate from Best Buy.

Mark your calendars with a red/green pen, create an entry in your Palm Pilot, HP or Dell pocket PC, update Outlook (all versions) and join us on Wednesday, December 6, 2006 for a fun and informative evening. The monthly meeting of the NOPCC starts at 6:30pm on the first Wednesday of every month. Location of the meeting is the J.D. Meisler school cafeteria at 3700 Cleary Ave. Metairie. Use the entrance through the breezeway on Pharr Street.

Figure 1. This script error warning occurred when we attempted to print a print-friendly version of a Web-based article.

Script error warnings are a result of the HTML (Hypertext Markup Language) code found on a Web page or HTML-based email message conflicting with script programs such as Microsoft JScript or Visual Basic Script. These programs are used to write shorter commands (script) that Web sites can execute without the need for user interaction or input.

Conflicts between HTML code and a script program stem from several possible reasons. It could be that there is a problem with the HTML source code on a particular Web page, or it may be that the DirectX component on your system is outdated or corrupt. An antivirus program on your system also may be the source of script errors. Antivirus programs can be configured to prevent your browser from running scripts and applets, and this could precipitate an error.

Internet Explorer can also be set to block active scripting. To understand what we mean, open IE, click Tools, choose Internet Options, and select the Security tab. With the Internet zone highlighted, click the Custom Level button. Scroll down the Security Settings dialog box to view the options for enabling/disabling ActiveX controls.

Another reason you may see a script error warning is if IE is set to kill pop-ups. (Open Tools, Internet Options, and select the Privacy tab to see the control for this setting.) A pop-up blocker can work so quickly on a Web page that it causes a script to fail.

Different Errors, Different Warnings

The beginning of script error warnings will read something like this: "An error has occurred in the script on this page." Below this you'll see the details of the error, such as, "The server is not available. The call did not execute." The details of each error may differ depending on the error source and Web site you're visiting.

Look at the example of a script error warning shown in Figure 1. We received this script error warning on a system running Norton Internet Security 2006 when we tried to print the print-friendly version of a Web-based article that we accessed through an email message we had received.

Figure 2. Some script error warnings, such as this example, pop up when you try to view an HTML (Hypertext Markup Language)-based email.

Now, look at Figure 2. This script error warning occurred when we tried to open an email that contained images. Our Outlook Express 6 is configured to automatically block images in email messages. As soon as we unblocked the images, we received the script error warning.

As you can see, the script error messages differ in details, but both end with the question, "Do you want to continue running scripts on this page?"

We always click Yes. As we've explained, running scripts is usually more annoying than it is fatal to your system. After you click Yes, the message should disappear, and you can go about viewing the Web page or reading the email.

Kill The Messenger

One of the settings in Internet Explorer lets you determine whether the browser will display script error warnings.

So, if script error warnings aren't necessary because they are not tipping you off to a serious problem, what can you do about getting rid of the warning? This is one time when it's OK to "kill the messenger."

One option is to change the settings in the IE browser. Choose Internet Options from the Tools menu and then click the Advanced tab. Under Browsing, make sure the Display A Notification About Every Script Error checkbox is not selected. Click Apply and then click OK.

One of the settings in Internet Explorer lets you determine whether the browser will display script error warnings.

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You may find that you're getting script error warnings even though the option mentioned above is not applied on your system. This means you will need to modify another setting in the Internet Options dialog box.

Under Browser, select the checkbox next to Disable Script Debugging (Internet Explorer). Or, if you're using a browser other than IE, select the checkbox next to Disable Script Debugging (Other).

When turned on, Internet Explorer's pop-up blocker tool can be a source of script error warnings.

When turned on, Internet Explorer's pop-up blocker tool can be a source of script error warnings.

Some, but not all, Windows users have the Mdm.exe file on their system. This is the Machine Debug Manager, a program installed with the Microsoft Script Editor to provide support for program debugging. Users of Microsoft Office 2000 and above will have this program on their system. It also can be downloaded from the Windows Update Web site (update.microsoft.com).

Because the Mdm.exe file can be a source of script error warnings, you can disable it to prevent seeing more unnecessary messages. You can use the Search tool (click Start and Search) to find the Mdm.exe file. However, a quicker method to disable this program is to open the Run dialog box (click Start and Run), type msconfig, and click OK. This opens the System Configuration Utility dialog box.

On the Startup tab, look for the Mdm.exe file on the list. If it's listed, deselect the corresponding checkbox. You will then need to restart your computer. Don't worry if the file isn't listed on the Startup tab. Even if the Search tool found Mdm.exe on your system, you may never need to run this program.

Win2000 doesn't have the Msconfig tool, so users will have to disable the Mdm.exe file through the Registry Editor. In Win2000, open the Run dialog

box again, type regedit, and click OK.

Next, Open the HKEY_LOCAL_ MACHINE key and click the SOFTWARE folder. Click Microsoft, Windows, CurrentVersion, and Run-Services. Delete any value that you find in this folder that refers to Mdm.exe.

The above steps should take care of annoying script error pop-ups. But if they persist, you can try one last option: Run an antispyware program, such as Spy Sweeper ($29.95; www.webroot.com). Certain types of spyware or adware on your system may be responsible for triggering the script error warnings.

No Big Deal

Compared to a virus that wreaks havoc on your system, a script error warning isn't a big deal. But, after a while they do get tiresome, as most pop-up messages do. Now you know that you can shut down script errors without weakening your computer. However, if you choose to leave them as is, rest assured that they aren't hurting your system, either.

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Belarc Advisor

I have three desktop and one laptop computer all running Microsoft Windows XP. I have tried to keep their system disks separated, but over time the plan has begun to fall apart. I do have the Product Keys on each of the folders, but did not include the LAN name of the computer associated with that particular disk.

If there was a way that I could determine the Product Key of each computer, I could then match the OS Cd's to the computer.

After trying several Google searches on "Product Key Finder", I found several applications that could be purchased. This did not suit my need as I only planned to do this once on each computer, so I searched adding the key word "Free".

This resulted in a link to "Belarc Advisor". I downloaded this application and tried it out on my machines.

(Continued from page 3)

I can't say enough good things about this free utility. It reports on everything you could possibly think of about machine. The information is so complete that Belarc suggest that you run a scan every time you modify your system, whether it be hardware or software.

From the website,

The Belarc Advisor builds a detailed profile of your installed software and hardware, missing Microsoft hotfixes, anti-virus status, CIS (Center for Internet Security) benchmarks, and displays the results in your Web browser. All of your PC profile information is kept private on your PC and is not sent to any web server.

Operating Systems: Runs on Windows 95/98/Me, NT 4, Windows 2000, XP and Windows Server 2003.

Browsers: Requires IE 3 or Netscape 3, and higher versions. Also runs on Opera, Mozilla, and Firefox.

File size: 1035 KB.

License: The license associated with this product allows for free personal use only. Use on multiple PCs in a corporate, educational, military or government installation is prohibited. See the license agreement for details.

Get your free copy at:

http://www.belarc.com/free_download.html

Submitted by Edward Jahnxcke
Member—NOPCC

Smart Computing Tips & Fun Facts

Picture – Perfect Prints: You'll always get the best results by using paper from the same company that made your printer. Manufacturers formulate their ink and paper to work well with one another, and you take a big risk in terms of output quality by using paper from a different manufacturer. This is not to say that you can never get good results using third-party paper; you can, but it may take a good deal of experimenting and trial-and-error.

Take A Shortcut: For quick access to a site, place a shortcut on your Desktop. Just right-click any blank portion of the Web page and se-

lect Create Shortcut from the pop-up menu. Click Yes when prompted to confirm your decision.

Cover Your Tracks: Sometimes you may not want to leave a chronological record of your online exploits. To flush out the History folder in IE6, choose the General tab in the Internet Options dialog box and click the Clear History button

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Laptop Offer from Dave Whittle.

Dave has arranged for 6% discount on genuine Thinkpads! IBM sold the division to Lenova but the engineering, quality and service are still the same. They have great human factors such as elegant design, are lightweight, have long battery life and are very durable. They offer features such as a spill-resistant keyboard with built-in keyboard light, choice of a Trackpoint or Touchpad mouse, the Active Protection System (which prevents hard disk damage from shock or dropping), dual antenna for better wireless reception, and a variety of great system software to make life easier: 'ThinkVantage Technologies.' They even offer an integrated fingerprint reader.

Thinkpads are more reasonable than you might think for the quality you get (prices start at under $680), especially considering you can get 6% off the website prices (see below). What's more, the Gartner Group estimates that Thinkpads save you 20% to 30% compared to other brands on the total cost of ownership over the life of the laptop, due to factors such as better testing and easier maintenance, durability, and usability.

To obtain the special 6% discount on the Thinkpad configuration of your choice, call Lenovo's user group inside sales rep, Isaac Williams, for help in configuring your system, or to get answers to your questions (1-877-338-4465, Option 1, Extension 6322). Just tell him the name of your user group and give him the discount code for user groups which is 42390. Alternatively, for quicker response you can go to www.lenovo.com/pr0ducts/us/en and click on 'Thinkpad notebooks,' and then on the Series you'd like to configure. After you choose all of the options you want, click Add to Cart, and then click on E-mail this Page. E-mail it to dave.whittle@usa.net and he will for-

ward it to Isaac, who will contact you to confirm the order, answer questions, and get your payment information. That's all you need to do to save between $40 and $210 on your new laptop while ensuring that you get the very best laptop available, customized just for you, and as quickly as possible.

Note: If you are thinking about upgrading to Vista in the future, don't forget to ask if the model you have chosen is ready for Vista.

You are receiving this discount offer as a benefit of your UGs membership in APCUG. Please forward it to your members as a benefit of membership in your UG.

APCUG does not endorse any company offering discounts, but makes these offers available as a service to its members.

Are You A Zombie?
How About Your Computer?
by S. Jack Lewtschuk
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There are literally hundreds of thousands, perhaps millions of "zombie computers" out there. Is your computer one of them?

Creating zombies out of computers used by you and me has become a major tool used by computer hackers, unscrupulous marketers, and other malicious evil-doers. A computer becomes a zombie when it performs tasks as instructed by someone other than the computer owner. The instructions given to the zombie usually involve distributing information to other computers, which the zombie computer does without notifying its owner. In every spare moment, a zombie computer sends out data, most of which is spam that tries to get someone to purchase something.

Watch for "Zombie Computer" Warning Signs
· The computer seems sluggish.

· The computer seems to be accessing the hard drive constantly.

· The mouse or keyboard becomes unresponsive.

· Excessive "bounce" notifications from people you never knowingly tried to e-

mail.

These warning signs may also be symptoms of other computer problems, but if you see any of them you should investigate. For more information on zombie computers and spam, check out the **Federal Trade Commission's Operation Spam Zombies** website at *http://www.ftc.gov/bcp/conline/edcams/spam/zombie/index.htm*.

Protect Your Computer from becoming a Zombie

Install a good **antivirus program** and make sure you update it regularly.

Install a good **two-way firewall**. It will notify you when information is being sent from your computer. Unfortunately the WindowsXP firewall is not adequate for this purpose—it is "one way" only.

Update your operating system and other software regularly.

Use an **anti-spyware program** to eliminate spyware on your system.

Check your antivirus and firewall software occasionally to make sure they are running properly—often one of the first instructions given to a zombie computer is to disable the antivirus and firewall software.

Don't open unknown/unexpected e-mail attachments!

Use caution when downloading software—buy from reputable companies, and be sure to read every screen as you download and install any software.

NOVICE CORNER
So, you've decided to download a program from the Internet. Are you sure that you really need it? OK, if you can't live without it, are all of your security programs active and updated? If so, click on "download" and cross your fingers.

An Internet download usually comes with a "prompt" from your browser—you'll be asked whether to "Run" (or "Open") or to "Save" the file. What should you do? Here's the difference:
If you select "Run", the download file will go

to your "Temporary Internet Files" folder. Then it will run or open automatically.

If you select "Save", you have to choose where the file will be stored on your hard drive (creating a "Downloads" folder on your C-drive might be a good idea at this point). The file will sit in this file until you decide to open it yourself.

So "Run" is convenient, but "Save" gives you more control and it's generally safer. Once the file is saved, you can run a virus scan on it and examine the file. On the other hand, you shouldn't be downloading something of which you are unsure. Downloads from companies you know—for instance, **Microsoft**, **Adobe** or **Apple**—are always OK.

Even if you do choose "Run", you may still have the option to do some checking. **Internet Explorer** often lets you view digital signatures from the download prompt. After you click "Run", a digital certificate message will pop up. You can click on the name listed under "Publisher" for more information. Under "Digital Signature Information", it should say, "This digital signature is OK". Otherwise, the file is high risk.

Another option you might see is a checkbox labeled something like "Always ask before opening this type of file". Other browsers might use different phrasing such as "Always perform this action with this type of file". The phrasing can be tricky—the two examples mentioned here have opposite effects. So be careful with options that include "always", "never" or "automatically". Select the setting that will alert you with *every* download. Good luck!

The Editorial Committee of the Association of Personal Computer User Groups (APCUG), an international organization of which this group is a member, brings this article to you.

The　　　　　　　　　　　　　　　**Part**

of Backup Nobody Mentions

by Vinny La Bash,
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Users Group, Inc., Florida
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http://www.spcug.org

There are dozens if not hundreds of ways to backup your data, but we're not going to talk about that. We're going to discuss the most important part of doing a backup, the part that is hardly ever mentioned. Do you believe that your backup is a sound copy of your data? Would you be at ease if all your files suddenly disappeared from your computer, and all you had was your backup to restore them?

If your confidence fizzled to zero, what's the problem?

You may have developed the most sophisticated and comprehensive backup scheme the computer world has ever seen, but you won't ever know if it's any good unless you test it. Without a valid method of testing, you can have no confidence in your backups. There are many things that can go wrong with a backup, some beyond your control, some not.

Perhaps one day you were in too much of a hurry, and you made a backup of one folder instead of your entire system as you planned. Hmm, no wonder that backup completed so fast.

Your backup disk got exposed to a magnetic field and scrambled all your data.

The CD containing your data was left in the car, and excessive heat warped the media, making it unreadable.

You encrypted your backup and lost the password to restore it.

You upgraded your backup software, and now it can't read your old backups.

Your new upgraded backup software program becomes corrupted, and you can't make a new backup or restore an old one.

Your new backup program has a great innovative file compression scheme. However, it turns out that it compresses better than anyone expected.

You upgrade your Windows Operating System and your backup software no longer works. (Rare, but it happens).

Let's stop here before you get too depressed to make another backup. What's important is to understand that a great many things can go wrong even with the best backup methods.

CLUB SUPPORTERS

The only true test of your backup is to do a restore and see if it works. Does this mean you have to erase all your files, and then run a restore from your backup media? No. Fortunately, there are less chancy ways of verifying your backup data.

One thing you can do is install a second hard drive

and restore your data files to the second disk. If your original disk has enough capacity, you can partition it into at least two sections, and restore into one of the new partitions. Hard drives have become almost dirt cheap, so this is not particularly expensive.

Another thing you can do is make at least three back-ups and store them in three different locations for safety. Keep one copy at home, but in a different room than your computer. Store a second copy at your office or a friend's house, and do the same for him or her. The third copy could be in a safe deposit box or similar secure location.

If you feel that such measures are not necessary, ask yourself if you are ready to perform the ultimate test. Would you feel totally at ease erasing your hard disk today and restoring it from your backups? If not, then think again.

December 2006

SUN	MON	TUE	WED	THU	FRI	SAT
					1	2 **Living with Home Electronics** WIST 690AM 10a-11a
3	4	5	6 **NOPC Gen Mtg** J.D. Meisler School 6:30p-8:30p	7	8	9 **Living with Home Electronics** WIST 690AM 10a-11a
10	11	12	13 **NOPC BOD** @ McCann's 6:30p-8:30p	14	15	16 **Living with Home Electronics** WIST 690AM 10a-11a
17	18	19 **Genealogy SIG** 7:00 pm Call 887.5746 for meeting location	20	21 **New User SIG** Old Metairie Library 6:30p-8:30p	22	23 **Living with Home Electronics** WIST 690AM 10a-11a
24	25 *Merry Christmas*	26	27	28	29	30 **Living with Home Electronics** WIST 690AM 10a-11a
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Other Important Numbers / Addresses

Club Hotline	Recorded messages. Meeting Information. Open 24 Hours	887-5746
NOPCC Web Site	On the World Wide Web. Our own home page and club information.	*www.nopc.org*