

[Home](#) / [Business Software](#)

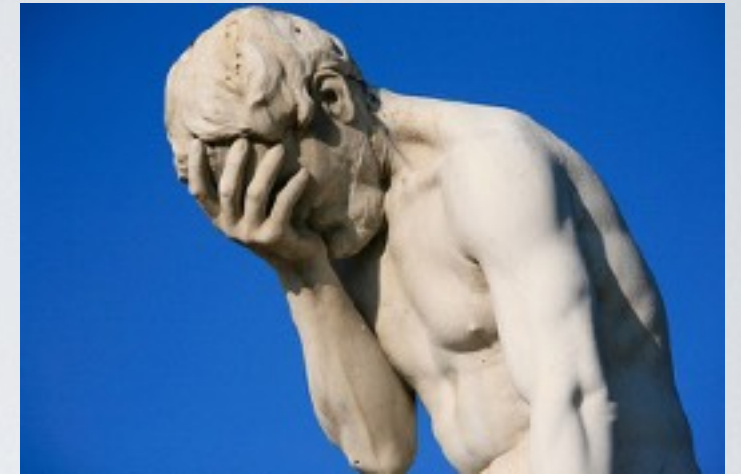
'Serious' Microsoft Office Encryption Flaw Uncovered

 [COMMENTS](#)

By [John E. Dunn](#), IDG News Service
Jan 27, 2005 4:00 PM

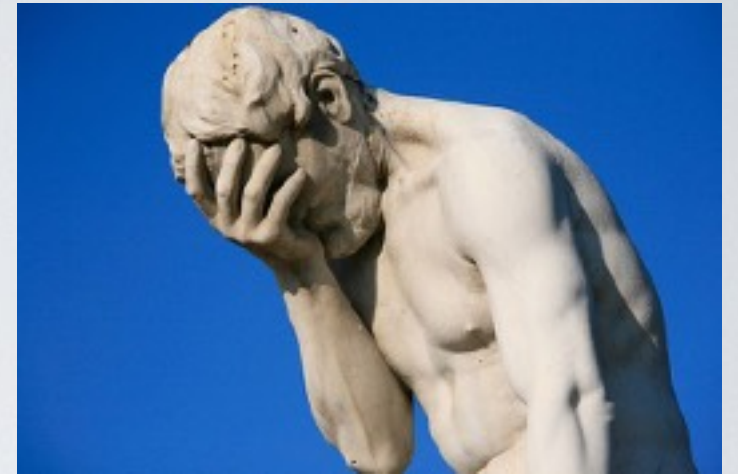
Cryptography expert Phil Zimmermann says he believes a flaw recently discovered in Microsoft Office's Word and Excel encryption is serious and warrants immediate attention.

"I think this is a serious flaw--it is highly exploitable. It is not a theoretical attack," says Zimmermann, referring to a flaw in Microsoft's use of RC4 document encryption unearthed recently by a researcher in Singapore.



MS Word and Excel 2003 used the same key to re-encrypt documents after editing changes

WEP - Wired Equivalent Privacy



- ➔ A random number IV (24 bits only) transmitted in clear between the clients and the base station

$$\text{RC4_key} = \text{IV} + \text{SSID_password}$$

- ⦿ 50% chance the same IV will be used again after 5000 packets