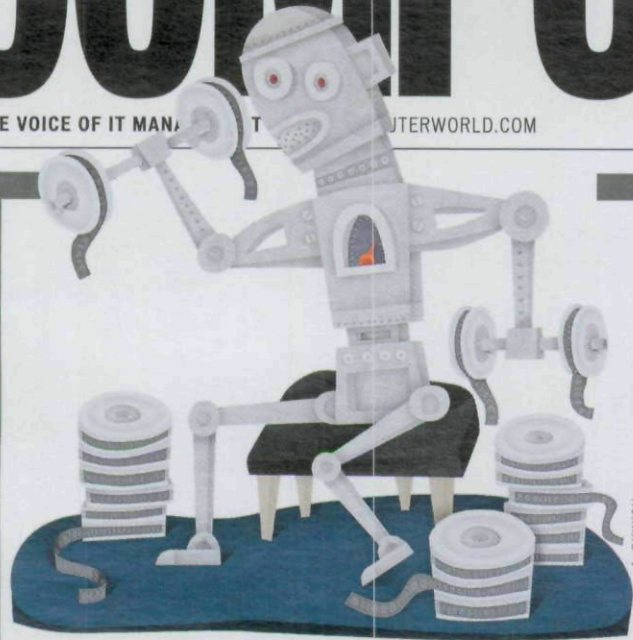




# COMPUTERWORLD

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## The Lean Storage Machine

SPECIAL REPORT

Companies are saving **huge amounts of data**, but when it comes to storage systems — **slim is in**. Read how leading companies use technologies that **save space, energy and money**. **PAGE 27**

## Microsoft Defends Effort to Patch Flaw

IT execs, researchers split over pace of work on ANI fix

BY GREGG KEIZER AND  
JAIKUMAR VIJAYAN

Microsoft Corp. first learned of an animated cursor flaw in Windows on Dec. 20 — more than 100 days before it released an emergency patch last week to block active attempts to exploit the vulnerability.

The head of the software vendor's security research laboratory defended the time it took to investigate the flaw and then develop and test the fix. Some IT managers are giving Microsoft the benefit of the doubt. But that

feeling isn't universal.

Hugh McArthur, director of information systems security at Online Resources Corp. in Chantilly, Va., said that in general, Microsoft's 100-day

turnaround time for patching the so-called ANI vulnerability doesn't seem all that unusual.

It wasn't as if the software vendor was "just sitting back and doing nothing," McArthur said. "My take is that Microsoft was hoping they

could get the fix written and tested prior to an exploit being written. In this case, they

didn't make it."

"I don't know if 100 days is good or not," said David Jordan, chief information security officer for the Arlington County government in Virginia. Jordan said that he "would like to have higher expectations" for Microsoft, since it's the largest software vendor in the world.

But, he added, he isn't sure that's a reasonable expectation because there is little credible data available on the average amount of time that it takes vendors to develop patches.

Less charitable toward Microsoft was Oliver Friedrichs, director of Symantec Corp.'s security response team.

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### INSIDE

Companies need **multiple layers** of security defenses to help stop zero-day attacks, users and analysts say. **PAGE 52**

**Malware** distribution is starting to look more like a regular on-line business. **PAGE 13**

## Thin Clients Get Microsoft's Approval — for Some Users

New licenses limited to SA customers

BY ERIC LAI

Once an avowed opponent of thin clients, Microsoft Corp. has made an about-face in recent years. And last week, the company brought its affair with network computing into the open, revising two previously ambiguous software licenses related to the streaming of Windows from servers to thin-client hardware.

But the changes favor subscribers to Microsoft's Software Assurance maintenance and upgrade program, and

some IT managers and Microsoft business partners said the revised licenses could add significant costs for non-SA users

**Why should Microsoft charge us more just because we're running Windows off a server?**

LEE STEINSDOERFER,  
IT MANAGER, ZION-BENTON  
TOWNSHIP HIGH SCHOOL

and smaller organizations. The potential new costs could be enough to make desktop virtualization financially unviable for some of those users.

"If they went after us, we'd probably have to drop the [streaming] product," said Lee Steinsdoerfer, technology director at Zion-Benton Township High School in Zion, Ill. The school is replacing its 700 desktop PCs with thin clients — essentially PCs without hard drives. End users will get Windows and their applications streamed to them from five central servers running software from Arden Inc.

Technically, all Microsoft customers who stream Windows are supposed to buy a

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## BRIEFS

**Infor to Buy Toronto Software Maker**

Infor Global Solutions GmbH has agreed to purchase Toronto-based online workforce management software vendor Workbrain Corp. for about \$227 million in cash. Infor said it plans to use Workbrain's software to expand its human resources software line, particularly in the areas of time and attendance, scheduling, absence management and workforce planning. The deal is expected to close in June.

**CEO Leaves eEye After Six Months**

After slightly more than six months on the job, eEye Digital Security CEO Ross Brown has left the company, eEye confirmed. According to a source familiar with the matter, the board of directors asked Brown to leave. Kamal Arafeh, eEye's senior vice president of sales and marketing, was named to replace him. Brown was named CEO last September, about a year after joining the company as chief operating officer.

**Marvell Licenses Sun Technology**

Sun Microsystems Inc. is licensing its multithreaded 10GB Ethernet networking technology to Marvell Technology Group Ltd., marking the first deal since the computer maker created a separate microelectronics group last month. Marvell, a fabless semiconductor firm, will use the Sun technology in high-performance networking products.

**Google Plans to Build Data Center in S.C.**

Google Inc. plans to invest \$600 million in a new data center in South Carolina, according to state officials. The facility will be built on a 519-acre site at the Mt. Holly Commerce Park near Charleston. The state said the center should employ about 200 people and projected that Google will make annual property tax payments of \$2 million (see related story, page 18).

Continued from page 1

**Thin Clients**

retail operating system license for every client device that is used to access the OS. But IT managers and analysts said the software vendor hasn't enforced that requirement.

Last week, though, Microsoft declared that only organizations with SA contracts would be able to run Windows Vista Enterprise on thin clients — or “diskless PCs,” as the software vendor calls them — at no extra cost beyond the standard Vista license fee.

Microsoft also said that only SA subscribers would be eligible for a new annual fee license called Windows Vista Enterprise Centralized Desktop. VECD lets companies deploy Vista in virtual machines on servers for use by both PCs and thin clients (see box).

Steinsdoerfer said Zion-Benton is too cash-strapped to subscribe to SA, which under a typical three-year contract tacks on charges amounting to 87% of the cost of Microsoft's desktop products and 75% of the cost of its server software.

And Steinsdoerfer is no fan of the idea of paying for additional Windows licenses. He noted that by simply installing hard drives on its thin clients,

the school could legally run Windows at a lower cost than it might have to pay to continue streaming the operating system. “Why should Microsoft charge us more just because we're running Windows off a server?” he said.

**Move to Diskless PCs**

The government of Oregon's Lane County is moving 1,500 users to diskless PCs that will have Windows XP and all of their applications streamed to them from virtual machines hosted on central servers.

As part of that move, the county is negotiating its first SA agreement with Microsoft, said Brad Carpenter, a senior information systems analyst for the county. Because of the SA contract, the move to thin clients will be “almost a wash” cost-wise, Carpenter said.

Third-party vendors such as Waltham, Mass.-based Ardenne, which was acquired in January by Citrix Systems Inc., and Austin-based ClearCube Technology Inc. have been offering technology for streaming Windows to client devices for several years.

But until now, “there was no licensing explicitly created by Microsoft to enable those scenarios,” said Scott Woodgate, a director in the company's Windows business

group. Woodgate said the new licenses are meant to make it easier to deploy streaming or virtualized infrastructures, although he added that Microsoft expects such deployments to remain “niche” applications appealing primarily to banks and other large customers.

Asked whether it plans to crack down on non-SA customers that stream Windows to thin clients, Microsoft declined to comment directly. The company said in a statement that it encourages users to take advantage of diskless PCs or virtual systems, “assuming that they have rights to Windows Vista Enterprise for each licensed device.”

Brian Madden, an indepen-

dent analyst in Silver Spring, Md., said the changes made by Microsoft are “a modernization of [its] license agreements so that what used to be a ‘don't ask, don't tell’ situation is now officially allowed.”

But Madden and other analysts said Microsoft is pushing hard to get users to sign up for Software Assurance.

“SA is becoming a handy way for Microsoft to monetize,” said Paul DeGroot, an analyst at Directions on Microsoft. DeGroot estimated that Microsoft garners \$1 billion a year solely from companies subscribing to SA for Windows, despite the fact that he thinks customers get “very little value” for their money. ▀

**SERVER-BASED WINDOWS OPTIONS****TERMINAL SERVER:**

■ Microsoft software that lets users access applications hosted centrally on a system running Windows Server.

■ Requires a Windows Server Client Access License for each device or user, plus a separate Terminal Server CAL for running Windows sessions.

**VISTA ENTERPRISE CENTRALIZED DESKTOP (VECD):**

■ A new Microsoft license that lets companies host Windows in virtual machines on servers.

■ Available only to customers with Software Assurance contracts; Microsoft is charging an undisclosed annual license fee.

**WINDOWS STREAMING VIA THIRD-PARTY SOFTWARE:**

■ Thin-client approach built around software streaming technology from vendors such as Ardenne and ClearCube.

■ Microsoft's modified Vista Enterprise license lets Software Assurance customers stream OS to thin clients at no extra cost; others must buy OS licenses for each device used.

**Privacy Advocate Pushes to Protect Data in Public Records**

BY JAIKUMAR VIJAYAN

For nearly five years, Betty “BJ” Ostergren — a feisty 57-year-old former insurance claims supervisor — has led a one-person crusade to persuade county and state government officials to stop posting public records containing Social Security numbers and other personal data on their Web sites. Last month, Ostergren persuaded the secretaries of state in Colorado and Arizona to break links to some commercial and tax lien documents. And last week, she began putting public pressure on Massachusetts Secretary of State William Galvin to do the same thing. Ostergren, who lives in Virginia, spoke with

Computerworld about her privacy campaign last week. Excerpts follow:

**Are there many counties around the U.S. that are still posting public records with personal data?** Yes, there are. It's stupid, it's reckless, and it's dangerous. Here's a thought: If somebody wants to see a public record, why don't they get in their car and drive down to the courthouse or the secretary of state's office? Don't be spoon-feeding criminals with stuff on the Internet.

**County clerks say all they're doing is making the same records that are available in the court-**

**house available online. What's wrong with that?** Sure, these are open records at the courthouse, as well they should be. But when we first started putting our records in these courthouses hundreds of years ago, it was for safekeeping and for different legal purposes. With the advent of the Internet, everybody wants to put all this crap online, and I just think that it's dead wrong.

**So who do you think is accessing the data?** Absolutely anybody and everybody can access it. People from outside this country are into these sites, and so are people from within this country. Maybe it's your neighbor down the street. A

site like the Colorado secretary of state's is free and open. Anybody can just simply sign up and get a password, and in a minute you can get right in.

**But some states and counties require you to pay for the records, right?** A subscription is no protection. In Virginia, for \$25 you can sign up to access [the Web site of] Fairfax County. I send in \$25 and I get a password and a username back in three days or so, and then I'm in there sitting on 33 million records and about 5 million Social Security numbers. That's where you lose control of those records. There are people downloading them by the gazillions. ▀

**Q&A**



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