

Mac malware door creaks open

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Apple has been encouraging developers to create new widgets for Tiger's Dashboard--a semi-transparent layer of everyday, often-used applications such as a calculator or currency converter that appears over the user's desktop--but within days of its public release, one developer claims to have already found a way to turn widgets into potential malware.

Developer Stephan, who has posted the widgets to his blog, has created two mini-apps which he describes as "slightly evil." One widget, he says, will automatically install itself on users' desktops when his "Zaptastic" Web site is visited using Apple's Safari browser.

This, according to Stephan, is a golden opportunity for porn scammers, enabling them to auto-install widgets that can hijack browsers.

According to Stephan's blog: "I happen to like (auto-install). I think it's a great thing. But, as I have demonstrated here, it has the side effect of setting up a situation where a user can be given an application without their knowledge.

"That's not such a big deal; by default, widgets can't do much damage, and they can't run unless you drop them into your dashboard. The funny thing is that once that widget is there, according to Apple, you CANNOT remove it."

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