



# THE RHODENIZER REPORT

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www.rhodenizer.com

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## CONFICKER VIRUS AWAKENS APRIL 1ST

In case you still haven't heard, the virus known as Conficker (or Downadup, or Kido) will awaken and "phone home" for instructions on April 1st.

The New York Times reports this virus has infected over 12 million PC's around the world (Mac's don't appear to be affected). Most victims are still unaware because the virus hasn't really done anything yet.

So, what will this virus do Wednesday? No one knows. The most alarming thing is how cleverly it was designed, and what it is capable of. For example, when Microsoft was alerted that this virus was spreading

itself through a vulnerability in the Windows XP operating system, they responded by issuing a patch via the online Windows update service that fixes it. A new variation of the virus then emerged - patching computers it had already infected with it's own counterfeit version of the same patch. So, when IT pros scan networks to determine which PC's are patched, they can't tell the difference.

The virus also disables automatic Windows updates and Windows Security Center with no visible indicators. It has also been found to block certain websites offering free Conficker



detection/removal tools.

Earlier this year Microsoft offered a \$250,000 reward for information leading to the arrest of Conficker's author(s).

Monday, the Dept. of Homeland Security, U. S. Computer Emergency Readiness Team, issued a press release announcing a software tool they (cont. P. 2)

## THE TAKE-AWAY POINTS:

- **Are your PC's patched and protected?**
- **Farewell to the CD-ROM encyclopedia.**
- **TuneUp Utilities to speed up your PC.**
- **Samsung 943 is a great LCD monitor.**

## ENCARTA COMES TO AN END

Microsoft has announced that their encyclopedia on CD-ROM product named Encarta will be discontinued next month after nearly 15 years on the market.

It was a big deal back in the early 90's. One of the first of it's kind, and very expensive, as I recall. Products like Encarta gave us one more practical reason to get a home computer. It was also the main reason I installed my first CD-ROM drive. That, and also games.

Before electronic encyclopedias, some of us had our own private encyclopedia sets at home, usually because Mom and Dad gave in to a door-to-door salesman. However, sales of encyclopedias in book form began to decline when products like Encarta appeared and showed us how much faster and easier it could be to search through information on the computer.

I find it ironic that Encarta was

based on a new technology that pushed a long established industry into obsolescence. Now, after only 15 years, the Internet has pushed Encarta into obsolescence.

It's sad to see the end of an era, but it just doesn't make sense to buy an encyclopedia on disk any more when free and constantly updated sources of information are on the Internet. It also leaves me wondering... what will be next? - C. R.

## RECOMMENDED TOOL FOR PC TUNE-UP

Preston Gralla of PC World magazine wrote this editorial review about TuneUp Utilities 2009 that I thought was worth quoting here for you:

“ If you're looking to tune up your PC, you won't go wrong with this latest version of TuneUp Utilities. This software does a comprehensive job of cleaning up your PC to make sure it runs faster, more smoothly, and without problems. It's one of the most comprehensive programs of its kind. TuneUp Utilities includes everything from a startup optimizer to a driver defragmenter, overall speed optimizer, Windows Registry cleaner, and more.

The overall organization of the included tools is quite simple, and TuneUp puts all of its considerable features within easy reach. Included are both one-step optimizers-

-for when you want to follow a click-once-and-then-done routine--and in-depth optimizers that let you pick and choose among recommendations.

Even if you think you've already whipped your PC into shape, you'll most likely find some excellent help here. For example, when using the Quick Optimization feature, I found half a dozen programs that I didn't realize ran when my system started. Telling the program to stop them from running automatically sped up my boot-up, and cut down on RAM use.

There's plenty more here as well, including a very nice Rescue Center that lets you undo any changes the program made to your system, as well as gives you access to System Restore.

Given that this program doesn't come cheap at \$50, should you buy it after trying it? That depends on the state of your system, your time, and your pocketbook. You can find many separate, free utilities that clean your Registry, hard disk, and system, and perform similar tasks as TuneUp Utilities. But you won't find a free one that does it all. So if you're looking for a single, do-it-all tool, TuneUp Utilities may well be worth it for you.”

My sentiments exactly. I use it as part of my software “toolkit” and I highly recommend it also. To download your free trial copy, just go to the “Cliff's Pick's” page of my website and click on the button for TuneUp Utilities 2009.

### TuneUp Utilities' 2009



**“If you're looking to tune up your PC, you won't go wrong with this latest version of TuneUp Utilities.”**

## CONFICKER VIRUS AWAKENS APRIL 1ST (CONT.)

(cont. from P.1) developed to detect Conficker. Director Mischel Kwon said, "Our experts at US-CERT are working around the clock to increase our capabilities to address the cyber risk to our nation's critical networks and systems, both from this threat and all others. The tool has been made available to federal and state partners via the Government Forum of Incident Response and Secu-

riety Teams (GFIRST) Portal, and to private sector partners through the IT and Communications sector Information Sharing and Analysis Centers (ISACs)."

US-CERT recommends that Windows users protect themselves by downloading the Microsoft patch MS08-067 ([www.microsoft.com/technet/security/Bulletin/MS08-067.mspx](http://www.microsoft.com/technet/security/Bulletin/MS08-067.mspx)) as quickly as possible. If users are un-

able to connect to their security solution Web site, or if they are unable to download free detection/removal tools, the PC should be considered infected and unplugged from the Internet. You can read more at [www.us-cert.gov](http://www.us-cert.gov).

Rhodenizer IT is already armed with several detection and removal tools in case we receive calls from clients to clean infected PC's.

## QUESTIONS FROM THE INBOX

**Q– “Hi Cliff, just wanted to ask if you know of any sites for free website hosting?”**

A– I used to. But, now I don’t know of any “free” sites that I can recommend.

If you can afford just \$3.99 a month, I think you’ll be very happy with the hosting service I use for all my websites. Just go to the “Cliff’s Picks” page of my website and click on “Best Web Hosting Deal”.

**Q– “Due to some layoffs in our company, we are moving people around to different offices and it’s now my job to get the phone and data connections moved. Can we just plug our phones and computers into any available wall jacks, or does something else need to be changed?”**

A– Unless they are setup to use VLAN’s (unlikely in such a small office), your computers can plug into any working LAN jack in any office, nothing needs to be changed. Same for network printers, you can move them anywhere you like.

Phones are another story. Your phone extensions are hard wired to the corresponding office jack. Moving the phone won’t change anything. You’ll need your phone service guy to re-route wires on the “punch-down block” in the back room for each extension that will be moved .

**Q– “Cliff, Do you have any recommendations for refurbished PC’s with XP Pro? I’m in the Roswell area and hope there is a source nearby.**

A– Sure. There are some outstanding deals on refurbished Dell Optiplex PC’s over at MicroCenter in Duluth right now. Most have Windows XP Pro and generous amounts of RAM memory.

The Dell Optiplex is one of my favorites for reliability and quiet operation. They are commonly deployed in large corporate environments when new, then sold after 3 years to resellers who test them out, reload the original software, and sell them as refurbs at greatly reduced prices.

Check microcenter.com for current inventory and call before you go to make sure someone can verify they have the one you want on hand.

**Q– “Sometimes, if I have Photoshop + iTunes + Firefox open, Firefox will crash. It also happens when ACT + Firefox are open. Do you think that’s just me overtaxing the RAM?”**

A– If you are getting a message to that effect, yes it could be. But I would check to make sure you have the latest updates for all those applications first.

If your applications have all

the latest patches and updates, check the operating system next. Go to [update.microsoft.com](http://update.microsoft.com) and download all of the updates in the “Critical” category only.

If the problem persists, you may need more RAM memory. Fortunately, prices are really cheap now and it’s very easy to find out what kind you need with the Crucial System Scanner tool.

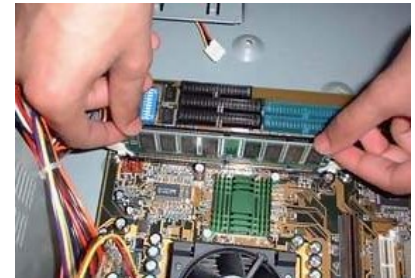
Just go to the “Cliff’s Picks” page of my website and click on the “Crucial Memory Upgrades” button. It will take you to the site where you can have your system scanned and a report will show you:

- A). Exactly what kind of memory modules you have installed, and how many.
- B). What kinds will work with your system and how much it can hold.
- C). Recommendations for upgrade based upon it’s findings.

Simply choose the best option for you, go through the checkout, and the memory modules will be delivered to your door via UPS. It’s that easy!

Unplug your PC first. Remove the cover. Plug them into the open slots. Put the cover back on. Plug the PC back in.

**E-mail your questions to:**  
[questions@rhodenizer.com](mailto:questions@rhodenizer.com)



**“...it’s very easy to find out what kind of memory you need with the Crucial System Scanner tool...”**

## SAMSUNG 943 LCD MONITOR

I recently did some research on LCD monitors because I was looking for a replacement for my old NEC. I was tempted to go with one of the cheap monitors because I'm not doing much graphics design or video editing. But, the reviews I read from unsatisfied owners turned me back toward a name I was familiar with from years ago.

The Samsung MultiSync used to be the "Rolls Royce" of monitors back when I was in corporate IT. The software developers would ask for them by name. Later, I owned an LCD version of the Multi-

Sync and was very happy with it (until my wife liked it so much she decided she needed to have it on her PC and I lost it). The NEC that I bought next did fine for Word documents and e-mails, but I could see that a certain level of detail was missing from what I had become used to.

Now that I was ready to buy another monitor, I decided to go back to the Samsung MultiSync and all I can say is... WOW! I didn't realize how much I was missing until I plugged in this newest addition to my system. Details in pictures, subtle shading in

graphics, even certain colors I had not been able to see at all were suddenly revealed with my new 19" Samsung MultiSync 943BX.

You can read all of the technical specs on their website if you are interested. I just wanted to report that this is one very nice monitor and I couldn't be happier with it. And, the price I got it for was much lower than I expected.

If you are looking for a low price on a great quality flat screen monitor, check out the "Cliff's Pick's" page of my website and click on the "NewEgg" logo.



## ABOUT RHODENIZER IT

We are a different kind of IT service provider. We don't resell any hardware or software. We find the best deals on what you need and pass the savings along to you.

Our mission is to help small businesses reduce expenses, increase productivity, and safeguard private information.

It's about more than just fixing computers. We also

provide IT consulting and services that include finding the best solutions to your business problems.

We work with clients to prepare disaster recovery plans that ensure their critical data remains safe, yet easily accessible. Additional benefits include money-saving ideas for managing your computer resources and planning for future business expansion.

We have the training, experience, and know-how to provide the right solutions for your needs, and your budget.

Just call to schedule your **free initial consultation with no risk, and no obligation.**

Tell me about your computer needs or IT issues. I'll recommend a course of action that makes sense for your situation at no cost to you. What have you got to lose?

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