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TECH NEWS ROUNDUP
COMPUTER VIRUSES

New utility flushes out trouble

Writing about computer virus-detection software is admittedly about as exciting as discussing the need to check the tire pressure on your car.

But just as a blowout has a way of capturing your attention, a new online anti-virus utility, Panda ActiveScan, caught our eye for doing what Norton AntiVirus Corporate Edition failed to do -- detect a computer virus that had been lurking in a temporary file folder for more than a year.

The utility runs from Panda's Web site (www.pandasoftware.com), detecting and eliminating any of 60,000 viruses and Trojans on your computer. You can try a scan for free. Then you get pop-up ads peddling Panda Antivirus Titanium for $39.95.

In our test, it inspected some 75,000 files and detected and quarantined Klez.H.

This virus, widely infecting computers last spring, overwrites executable computer files and modifies some system controllers, preventing the system from starting up correctly. Like many other viruses, it's intended to hijack e-mail addresses in the Microsoft Outlook.

Panda CTO, Patrick Hinojosa, said the company's technology is particularly adept at scanning for viruses in hard-to-detect places.

-- Dawn Chmielewski