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From the Standards Blog:

I have the virus du Jour (you know, the whatchamacallit)

[] [] January 29, 2004

So, how full is your email inbox today? Chances are that you're being bombarded with email bearing the pesky zip file that will unleash the dreaded MyDoom virus on your system. If you're unlucky enough to be already infected, then your inbox is really brimming, as you'll also be receiving tons of rejection email from the filters of everyone in your address book, informing you that you are electronically unclean. Some estimate that all of this back and forth traffic represents 20 - 30% of all email being exchanged today - and that the problem will drag on for months.

Ever wonder where these names come from, and why this one is MyDoom, and not "Loveletter (PS)", or "Larry"? Who sets these names, anyway?

Well, nobody, really, as it turns out. Or more accurately, anybody. And just to keep things interesting, sometimes two or three anybodies. As a result, even though rapid response is key to containment, it takes awhile for the industry to virally settle on one name or another to identify the latest barbarian at the IT gates. You'd think with all of the standards bodies around, that someone would come up with some sort of naming convention to set up an equivalent to the Hurricane name list. How hard, exactly, can this be?

Apparently harder than one would think, perhaps due to the pioneer spirit of the caffeine-driven security folks that seek to contain the damage. The problem is highlighted by Reuters' European Internet Correspondent, Bernhard Warner in a recent article engagingly titled "Bagle Virus Slows, Fuels Naming Debate." As Warner reports:

Since emerging on Sunday, "Bagle" has been something of a mystery. Computer security experts first called it "Beagle" after pulling the reference from a line of code found in the malicious program. Later, it was given the name "Bagle," a misspelled version of the doughnut-shaped roll. To the virus-weary public, warnings about a malicious bagel drew more questions than normal.

As well they might. The article goes on to say that the problem seems irresolvable, because "new monikers are in short supply," and that the industry is unlikely to agree on a naming convention. Come on now. Names in short supply?

In the interest of public service, I therefore hereby volunteer to be the Linus Torvalds of viral nomenclature, and declare my willingness to set up a virtual delicatessen "take a name" site. Anyone can simply tear off the top name, and there you go. Problem solved.

Here's my starter set:

- **Darl** [as in McBride]
- **KennyG** [as in Muzak]
- **Osama** [as in, well, you know].

Comments? updegrove@consortiuminfo.org

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Useful Links and Information:

Reuters article: 'Bagle' E-Mail Virus Slows, Fuels Naming Debate
http://story.news.yahoo.com/news?tmpl=story&cid=569&ncid=738&e=2&u=/nm/20040121/tc_nm/tech_virus_dc

CNET says this is the Big One: MyDoom virus declared worst ever
http://news.com.com/2100-7349-5149764.html?tag=nl

SCO's not laughing: **SCO offers $250,000 reward for arrest of Mydoom worm author**
http://www.computerworld.com/securitytopics/security/virus/story/0,10801,89470,00.html