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May 02, 2006 (3:48 PM EDT)

Trojan Snags World Of Warcraft Passwords To Cash Out Accounts

By [Gregg Keizer](#), TechWeb.com

A new password-stealing [Trojan](#) targeting players of the popular online game "World of Warcraft" hopes to make money off secondary sales of gamer goods, a security company warned Tuesday.

MicroWorld, an Indian-based anti-virus and security software maker with offices in the U.S., Germany, and Malaysia, said that the PWS.Win32.WOW.x [Trojan horse](#) was spreading fast, and attacking World of Warcraft players.

If the attacker managed to hijack a password, he could transfer in-game goods -- personal items, including weapons -- that the player had accumulated to his own account, then later sell them for real-world cash on ["gray market"](#) Web sites. Unlike some rival multiplayer online games, Warcraft's publisher, Blizzard Entertainment, bans the practice of trading virtual items for real cash.

"Win32.WOW is a clear indication that [malware](#) writers are targeting anything that involves money," said MicroWorld chief executive Govind Rammurthy in a statement. "Bucks may be smaller compared to a Trojan that steals bank accounts or credit card numbers...[but] cyber criminals are not complaining as long as the target is soft and numbers are high."

The Trojan spreads via traditional vectors, such as e-mail and [peer-to-peer file](#) sharing, added Rammurthy, but it has also been watched while it installs in a drive-by [download](#) from gaming sites' pop-up ads. The surreptitious installation is accomplished by exploiting various vulnerabilities in Microsoft's Internet Explorer Web browser.

Identity thieves have aimed at Warcraft previously. Just over a year ago, [players were warned](#) about a campaign that collected passwords from a bogus log-in site.

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