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Windows
Microsoft

[\\$250,000 Reward for the Author of Nasty Worm Affecting Windows 7, Vista and XP](#)

The money will be paid for info that will lead to an arrest and conviction

Microsoft has upped the stakes in the face-off with malware creators, and in a case of "dead-or-alive," the company is bringing out the heavy guns and offering no less than a \$250,000 reward for any information that will lead to the arrest and conviction of the author/authors of the [Conficker \(Downadup\) worm](#). Capable of infecting all Windows operating systems, including Windows 7 Beta, as well as earlier and later releases, and also Windows Vista Service Pack 1 and Windows XP SP3, Conficker was initially spread via exploits targeting a Critical vulnerability in Windows Server Service. Since the vulnerability was patched in October 2008, the malicious code evolved, with two versions, Conficker.A and Conficker.B, using additional attack vectors including unprotected network shares and portable media's AutoPlay feature.

"As part of Microsoft's ongoing security efforts, we constantly look for ways to use a diverse set of tools and develop methodologies to protect our customers," explained George Stathakopoulos, general manager of the Trustworthy Computing Group at Microsoft. "By combining our expertise with that of the broader community we can expand the boundaries of defense to better protect people worldwide."

Microsoft has deemed the [Conficker worm](#) as nothing short of a criminal attack, and considers the reward a stem to this scenario. The company indicated that residents of any country worldwide are eligible for getting the \$250,000, as long as they lead international law enforcement agencies to the author of Conficker. In the past, the software giant revealed that the worm was designed not to infect computers with the Ukrainian keyboard layout, which could be an indication that its creator was Ukrainian.

"The best way to defeat potential botnets like Conficker/Downadup is by the security and Domain Name System communities working together," added Greg Rattray, chief Internet security advisor at ICANN. "ICANN represents a community that's all about coordinating those kinds of efforts to keep the Internet globally secure and stable."

The software giant has also announced that it has inked a partnership with various companies and organizations in an attempt to fight the worm. Microsoft currently collaborates with ICANN, NeuStar, VeriSign, CNNIC, Afilias, Public Internet Registry, Global Domains International Inc., M1D Global, AOL, Symantec, F-Secure, ISC, researchers from Georgia Tech, the Shadowserver Foundation, Arbor Networks and Support Intelligence against Conficker.

"Microsoft's approach combines technology innovation and effective cross-sector partnerships to help protect people from cybercriminals," Stathakopoulos stated. "We hope these efforts help to contain the threat posed by Conficker, as well as hold those who illegally launch malware accountable."