

Adobe Flash Player exits Android Google Play store

BBC ONLINE

Adobe is pulling its Flash Player plug-in from Android's Google Play store.

It follows a decision to halt development of the software for mobile devices.

The plug-in allows multimedia content created using the Flash format to be viewed via a web browser.

Adobe will continue to develop the player for PCs. It will also support Air - a tool which lets developers turn web-based applications using Flash into standalone mobile apps.

The Flash Player had been popular on Google Play - with two-thirds of users giving it a top score.

But Adobe said it was removing the option to install the plug-in because it was likely to exhibit "unpredictable behaviour" when used with the latest version of Android, known as Jelly Bean.

It also suggested that smartphone owners who had upgraded to the latest system should uninstall the Flash Player if it was already on their device.

Although Adobe is no longer actively developing the player for Android, BlackBerry or Symbian devices - and never released it for Apple iOS or Windows Phone handsets - it has said it would continue to offer security updates and bug fixes for existing versions until September 2013.

Kaspersky discovers new malware



IT & TELECOM DESK

Kaspersky Lab recently announced the discovery of Gauss, a new malware.

Gauss is a complex, nation-state sponsored cyber-spying toolkit designed to steal sensitive data, with a specific focus on browser passwords, online banking account credentials, cookies, and specific configurations of infected machines.

Gauss has so far targeted users in the Middle-East.

The online banking Trojan functionality found in Gauss is a unique characteristic that was not found in any previously known malware.

Gauss was discovered during the course of the ongoing effort initiated by the International Telecommunication Union (ITU), following the discovery of Flame. The effort is aimed at mitigating the risks posed by cyber-weapons, which is a key component in achieving the overall objective of global cyber-peace.

Kaspersky Lab discovered Gauss in June 2012 by identifying the similarities it share with Flame (malware found in May 2012).

These include similar architectural platforms, module structures, code bases and means of communication with command & control (C&C) servers.

Kaspersky Lab's analysis found that Gauss began operations in the September 2011 timeframe. The Gauss C&C infrastructure was shutdown in July 2012 shortly after its discovery. Currently the malware is in inactive state, waiting for its C&C servers to become active.

Kaspersky Lab's cloud-based security system also recorded over 2,500 infections since late May 2012. Kaspersky said the estimated total number of victims of Gauss could be in tens of thousands. This number is lower compared to the case of Stuxnet (malware discovered in June 2010) but it's significantly higher than the number of attacks in Flame and Duqu

(malware found in September 2011).

Analysis of Gauss shows it was designed to steal data from several Lebanese banks including the Bank of Beirut, EBLF, BlomBank, ByblosBank, FransaBank and Credit Libanais. It also targets users of Citibank and PayPal.

Multiple modules of Gauss collect information from browsers, which include the history of visited websites and passwords. It also sends back detailed data on the infected machine to the attackers, including specifics of network interfaces, the computer's drives and BIOS information.

Gauss can also infect USB thumb drives, using the same LNK vulnerability that was previously used in Stuxnet and Flame. Its process of infecting USB sticks is more intelligent. Gauss is capable of "disinfecting" the drive under certain circumstances, and uses the removable media to store collected information in a hidden file. Gauss also installs a special font - Palida Narrow. The purpose of this action is still unknown.

While Gauss is similar to Flame in design, the geography of infec-

tions is noticeably different. The highest number of computers hit by Flame was recorded in Iran, while the majority of Gauss victims were located in Lebanon. The number of infections is also different. Based on telemetry reported from the Kaspersky Security Network (KSN), Gauss infected approximately 2,500 machines while Flame infected close to 700 machines.

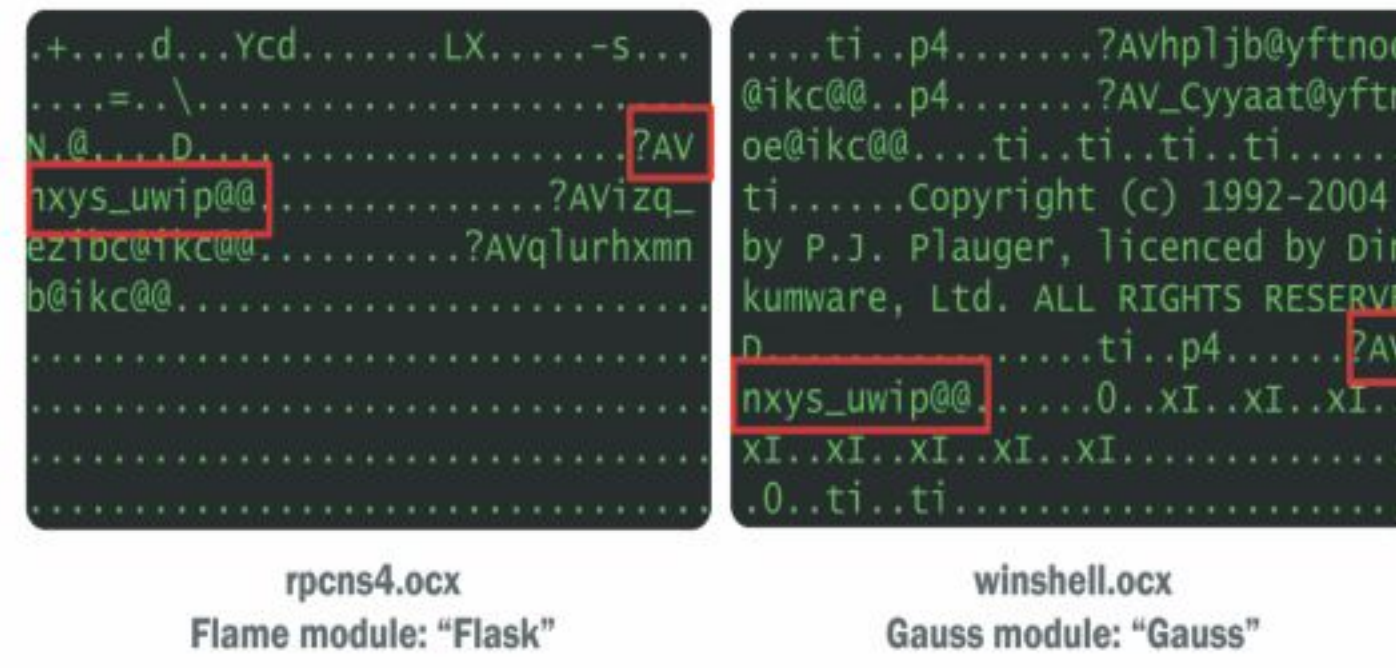
Although Gauss' exact method of infecting the computers is yet to be known, it is clear that Gauss spreads in a different manner than Flame or Duqu. And Gauss' spreading mechanisms are conducted in a controlled fashion, which emphasise stealth and secrecy for the operation.

Creators of Gauss' main module named it after the German mathematician Johann Carl Friedrich Gauss. Other components bear the names of famous mathematicians as well, including Joseph-Louis Lagrange and Kurt Gödel.

At the moment Gauss is remedied by Kaspersky, classified as Trojan-Spy.Win32.Gauss.

Source: Kaspersky Lab

How Gauss is similar to Flame:



Samsung launches smart TVs

IT & TELECOM DESK

Samsung has recently launched a line of smart TVs from its D series in Bangladesh.

The newly launched smart TVs are 40D6000, 46D6600, 46D8000, 55D6600 and 55D8000.

Samsung has always been one of the pioneers in smart technologies. Its latest line of televisions has created a new dimension of entertainment valuation. Samsung has proclaimed a new era of entertainment by placing TV at the centre of the home ecosystem and breaking the boundaries between connected devices. As content grows to become smarter, robust and more accessible, Samsung's vision for the way in which consumers interact with their TVs has also enhanced.

The smart TVs enable you to use social networking websites such as Facebook and Twitter in the TVs. You can also browse websites through built-in browser. Smart Interaction enables the owners to communicate with their TVs through Voice Control, Motion Control, and Face Recognition.

You can also use Samsung smartphones as remote controls for the TVs.

Samsung smart TV has over 1,400 apps including Angry Birds, Discovery Channel. Its new powerful dual-core processor allows consumers to access even more of Samsung's abundant content choices at once, through the ability to use and download multiple apps while browsing the Web or watching TV.

With proprietary system-on-chip technology, Samsung is the only company that delivers an evolving TV. With a simple slot-in to the back of TV, Samsung's Evolution Kit allows you to upgrade your TVs with the latest TV technology.

Accept for 46D8000, all the other available Smart TVs have 3D feature.

The 40D6000 has price tag of Tk 1, 72,000; 46D6600 has price tag of Tk 2, 28,000; 46D8000 (not 3D) is available at Tk 2, 36,000; 55D6600 has a price tag of Tk 3, 30,000 while 55D8000 is available at Tk 395,000.

USAID extends health info services to pregnant and new mothers via mobile phones

IT & TELECOM DESK

The US Agency for International Development (USAID), US government's principal development agency, has been spreading important health messages to expectant and new mothers across Bangladesh via mobile phones.

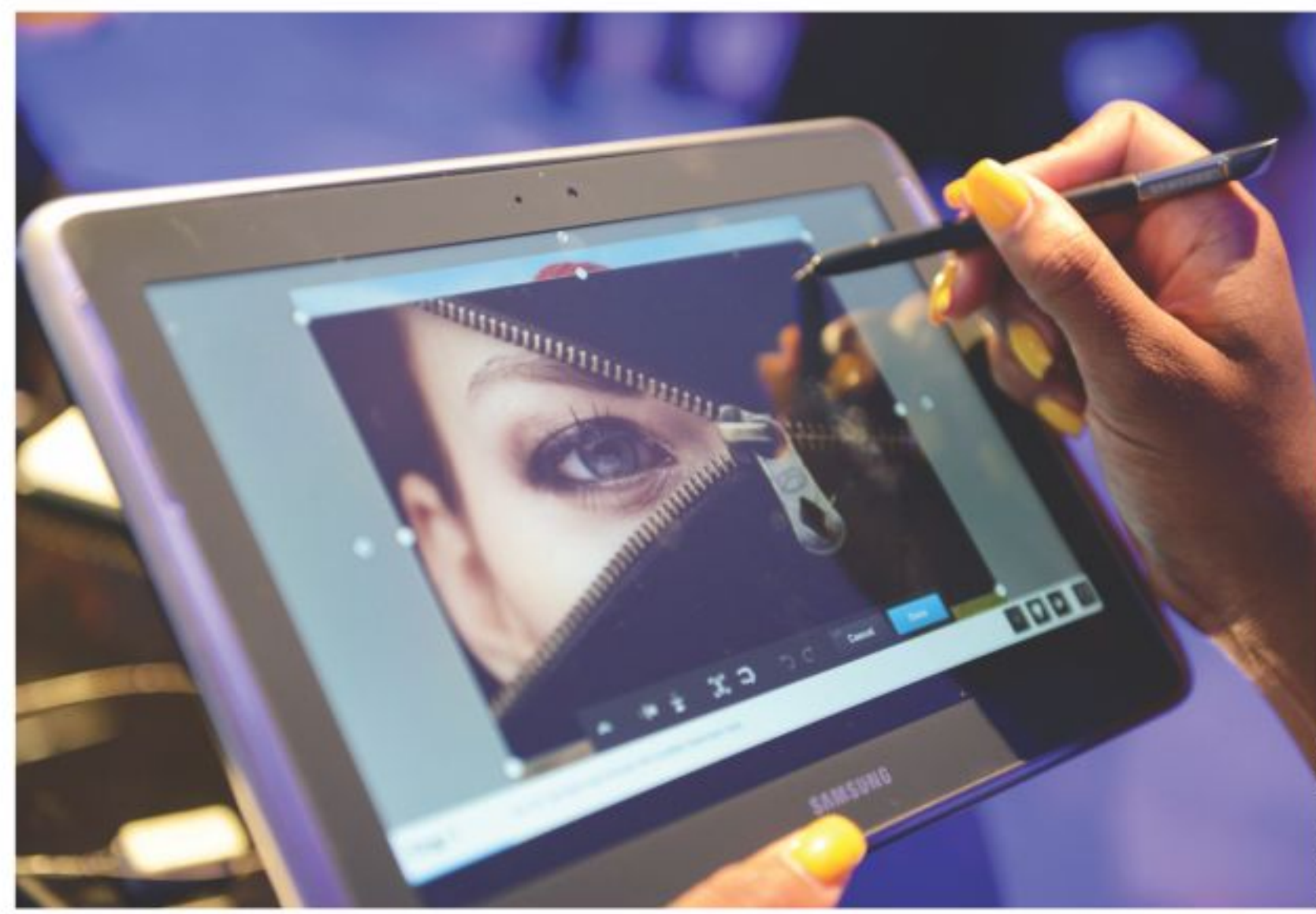
In this effort, the USAID-funded Aponjon initiative has partnered with the Government of Bangladesh (GoB) and a number of local and international organisations that includes BRAC, Maternal & Child Health Integrated Program (MCHIP), Smiling Sun Franchise Program, Social Marketing Company (SMC), Fair Price International (pvt).

Aponjon is a public-private partnership that has brought together Johnson and Johnson (American multinational medical equipment and pharmaceuticals manufacturer), the UN Foundation, which links UN activities with other NGOs/corporate bodies, and Baby Centre LLC, a pregnancy and parenting website, to disseminate health information to expectant and new mothers through mobile phones.

Through dissemination of health messages via mobile phones, Aponjon will contribute in reducing maternal and newborn deaths by encouraging mothers and their families to be informed of necessary health conditions and services when necessary.

The \$1.5 million Aponjon initiative is implemented and coordinated by D.Net in Bangladesh and will be available through all mobile operators' networks.

Samsung takes on iPad with Galaxy Note tablet



AFP, New York

Samsung on Wednesday unveiled a Galaxy Note tablet designed to make a more personal connection with users and aiming to knock Apple's iPad off its market throne.

A key feature of the Galaxy Note 10.1 was a sophisticated "S Pen" that can be used as if it were a pen on paper or a computer mouse.

"The mission of this device is personalisation -- using pen input to

create more human communication," Galaxy Tab consumer business division director Travis Merrill told AFP while providing an early look at the new tablet.

"Receiving a handwritten note from someone you know is so much more emotional and powerful than just receiving an email," he said.

Samsung built technology from Japan-based Wacom into the tablet screen to create a layer that can sense "S Pens" so precisely it can tell how

hard they are being pressed or even if they are hovering, slightly out of touch.

"If you don't want to use the S Pen you don't have to but it is really the heart and soul of the device," Samsung Telecommunications America product strategy director Shoneel Kolhatkar said.

Note 10.1 tablets are powered by Google's latest generation Android software and feature powerful quad-core processors as well as two gigabytes of RAM for quick handling of videos, games and other graphics rich content.

The tablets are Wi-Fi enabled to connect with the internet at hotspots.

Software in the tablet lets users hand write notes or scrawl comments on images or documents and then store them or post them to social networks or send them in email messages.

A service in the tablet recommends applications designed to run well on the hardware or which are customised to take advantage of S Pen capabilities.

"With the S Pen, using pressure, I can get as fine or as thick a line as possible," Kolhatkar demonstrated. "It is almost like pencil on paper. We

really believe this is a game changer."

The tablet also knows to ignore pressure from the palm of someone using an S Pen, freeing users to write or draw naturally.

Note 10.1 software can convert handwriting to text or crudely drawn objects to crisp geometric figures, and even correct written scientific or mathematical formulas, according to the demonstration.

Samsung worked with Adobe to make free Photoshop software that allows people to use S pens to edit images on the Note 10.1 with accuracy and ease.

Movies, games and other entertainment content for devices are available at a Samsung media hub, along with a growing "ecosystem" of applications made by third-party developers.

Samsung also built "personal computing" power into Note 10.1 by letting users engage in several tasks at the same time, perhaps watching a video while working on a presentation and roaming the Internet.

"This is the first of its kind when it comes to multi-tasking," Merrill said. "This is really about being able to do multiple things at once."

Oracle workshop on data centre optimisation

IT & TELECOM DESK

Oracle recently organised a workshop on 'Data Centre Optimisation' in the capital.

The workshop discussed new challenges such as spiraling power and cooling costs, unplanned downtime, and the need for new services and how to minimise the pressure on application infrastructure inside today's data centres as new industry trends such as mobility and big data are putting tremendous pressures on it.

Professionals from various industries such as telecommunications, FSI, manufacturing, public sector along with partners attended the workshop.

At the workshop experts said current data centre operations are unsustainable and often fail to meet the needs of growing businesses and by optimising the existing data centre, organisations can significantly increase their IT efficiency along with system performance, availability, and security while reducing their spending on systems operations and integration that eat up around 80 per cent of the IT budget.

The Optimised Data Centre is a roadmap on which Oracle has developed and transformed its own data centre infrastructure and has proven essential in its ability to grow, innovate and deliver unique products to the market.

Ahsen Javed, country senior director, Oracle South Asia Growth Economies said Data Centre Optimisation is not a machine or software but a combination of storage, servers, operating system, engineered systems, and software to simplify IT infrastructure.

Through data centre optimisation, organisations can consolidate servers by 100:1, reduce deployment time, while lowering costs by 75% and make their applications response time and throughput faster by 10x to 50x.

Oracle's engineered systems, for instance, are purpose-built machines for needs such as data warehousing, online transaction processing, and analytical processing at the enterprise or departmental level.

New products from Asus

IT & TELECOM DESK

Asus has unveiled two new products, an all in one touchscreen desktop PC and a motherboard, in the local market.

The ET1611PUT all in one touchscreen desktop PC features a decent 15.6 inch LCD display that is touch enabled.

Innards of this machine are same as what you would find in Atom based nettops.

ET1611PUT is powered by an Atom D425 1.8GHz single core processor and comes with 2GB DDR-3 RAM, 320GB Hard Disk, on board graphics, built-in speakers, Gigabit LAN, webcam, 4 USB 2.0 ports, USB keyboard and mouse etc.

With its mercury-free and super-bright 15.6" LED backlight panel, energy-efficient Atom processor, and a package with 80% recycled material, the

ET1611PUT uses less energy and can be easily recycled.

The PC has a price tag of Tk 34,000.

The P8B75-M LE motherboard supports the Intel 3rd/2nd generation processors in the LGA1155 package, with iGPU, memory and PCI Express controllers integrated to support onboard graphics output with dedicated chipsets, 2-channel (2 DIMM) DDR3 memory and 16 PCI Express 3.0/2.0 lanes. This provides great graphics performance. This motherboard is also rich in spec, including multi-GPU support, 8-channel audio. The motherboard also has USB 3.0 & SATA 6 Gb/s ports and gigabit LAN, that allow users to experience the thrill of faster data transfer rates.

The motherboard has a price tag of Tk 9000.

