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Microsoft users at the mercy of hackers after flaw revealed

Microsoft users worldwide are at risk of fraud, identity theft, malicious surveillance and remote access as a result of a significant flaw embedded in its operating system.

Paul Foster, Group Chief Information Officer at Cybersec Innovation Partners (CIP), discovered a revoked certificate of Taiwanese origin while conducting an exercise utilising his company's certificate management tool Whitethorn. Foster alerted Microsoft that the certificate from Chunghwa Telecom had expired and asked them to take immediate action.

Foster, former global head of cyber security at HSBC, said: "I was astonished at what we found when we scanned a new Microsoft Surface Pro. This has been a real eye-opener into flaws in certificate management at trusted vendors. You can't blame Microsoft because before Whitethorn there was no mechanism for finding these revoked certificates.

"This software should not be trusted unless all revoked certificates have been replaced and an updated version of the software issued.

"In one case, a revoked certificate with code-signing privileges existed from 2012. I wonder how many times this has been exploited so far? It's a frightening prospect not just for Microsoft users, of which there are over a billion, but all of us who rely on systems that use their software – the military, healthcare, security services, transport, to name a few."

CIP is the UK-based cyber security company that provides Whitethorn – the next-generation digital certificate detection and management software which was developed to discover certificate breaches in a military environment.

NOTE TO EDITORS

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Whitethorn® is the only digital certificate discovery platform that can today find all of the digital certificates on your systems, and identify which are compromised and which are going to expire shortly. Whitethorn® is the most comprehensive certificate and key discovery, management and automation technology. Its next-generation capability is unrivalled providing full visibility and management of what was previously considered impossible.

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