

Re: Newbie Question: Windows Explorer

Source: <http://www.derkeiler.com/Newsgroups/comp.security.firewalls/2002-10/10679.html>

From: Tony Whitmore (tony_whitmore@nospamhotmail.com)

Date: 10/04/02

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Date: Fri, 4 Oct 2002 12:05:53 +0100

Any firewall should highlight unknown applications asking for permission and so it is more a case of whether you want to allow it access or not. Under Win98 explorer.exe and iexplore.exe are essentially the same application (although they are separate executables) and work in much the same way. This allows you to type a URL into the Explorer address bar and access a website, and enter "c:\\" into the Internet Explorer address bar and access your hard disk contents. The one application changes into the other when you try it. If you enter a URL into Explorer and it wants to access the internet to fetch it, that seems sensible. After all, how else can it get the remote webpages? If you want to stop explorer.exe from accessing the internet, don't enter URLs into the address bar, and set your firewall to block outgoing connection attempts.

However, if you allow explorer.exe to access the net then that doesn't mean it is acting as a server, allowing your information to be served to the internet. If you are worried about this you could configure your firewall to allow explorer.exe outgoing rights only. Then it could fetch webpages quite happily. I suspect that some of the people who have talked about the "potential abuse" aspect of firewalling explorer.exe have been tricked by a website that has used IEs features to show an Explorer window in their website, with the contents of your hard disk. Although it is worrying, it IS just a trick. There are several "security" sites out there which use it.

Cheers,

Tony Whitmore

"Larry G" <thelarry_g3@yahoo.com> wrote in message

news:anjddb\$el9ac\$1@ID-37509.news.dfncis.de...

> I've tried two firewalls so far: ZoneAlarm and Outpost. On both of these,
> whenever I connect to a webpage *Windows Explorer*, the file manager
> (explorer.exe) asks for permission to access the 'net whenever I wish to
> access a webpage. If I deny it permission, I cannot access websites.

>

> I've been told that many people deny *Windows Explorer*, the file manager,
> access to the 'net with firewalls because if you give them permission,
this

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> opens up your whole hard drive to potential abuse. Others seem nonchalant
> about this question, and matter of fact that explorer.exe should access
the
> 'net because it is part of MS integrated browser with the OS.
>
> So, which is it? Is it normal for *Windows Explorer* to request
permission
> to access the 'net when going to websites? I would have thought it would
be
> Internet Explorer (iexplore.exe) that would request the permission. Some
> people say that they can deny *Windows Explorer* access to the 'net, and
> still go to websites on IE. However, I cannot. I've checked for trojans,
> and my system is reported clean. Am I still adequately protected with a
> firewall if I grant it permission?
>
> Thanks for any clarifications on this subject. Am I still protected by
the
> firewall, if I grant *Windows Explorer* access to the internet in order to
> go to websites on IE.
>
> Running:
> Windows 98SE
> Compaq 5834
>
> Larry
>

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