



Digital Artist Quarantines World's Most Dangerous Computer Viruses On Laptop

Technology has seen some astonishing developments in the last 50 years. We mainly hear about the ones that are directed at consumers, while others remain beneath the surface. Since before 1985, [Network Time Protocol](#) has been the longest standing Internet protocols in use to this day and it syncs all the clocks on a network. Some years ago, computer viruses pestered casual internet users, but they're not much of a problem anymore. We hear of massive hacks, breaches, and viruses that impact corporations and governing bodies, but many people conceptually distance themselves from these things and see them as events that don't directly affect us.

Digital artist Guo O Dong seeks to show the world how silly this train of thought is.

"We have this fantasy that things that happen in computers can't actually affect us, but this is absurd. Weaponized viruses that affect power grids or public infrastructure can cause direct harm," he says.

He shows this in a piece of art titled *The Persistence of Chaos*. To the casual observer, it's just an outdated laptop. However, the 11-year-old [Samsung netbook](#) is infected with six computer viruses that have collectively caused the world approximately \$95 billion in damages. The piece just sold for \$1.345 million.

"We have come to understand this project as a kind of bestiary, a catalog of historical threats. It's more exciting to see the beasts in a live environment," adds Dong.

It's estimated that between [75% and 80% of malicious attacks](#) come from within an organization rather than an outside threat, but this collection of viruses was specifically made to be weaponized to devastating effect. Dong collaborated with a [team of engineers](#) from cybersecurity firm *Deep Instinct* to install the six viruses, which are called *WannaCry*, *BlackEnergy*, *ILOVEYOU*, *MyDoom*, *SoBig*, and *DarkTequila*. Corporations [worth \\$10 million or more](#) are required to electronically file their 1120/1120S income tax returns and most of these silent viruses target government bodies, quietly gleaning information from some of the most presumably secure technical infrastructures in the world.

One report tells that most of the money used to bring this [project to fruition](#) was spent making sure that the viruses were totally quarantined on the laptop. It's unable to connect to unsecured internet networks and all the USB ports have been disabled. The laptop is currently in an empty one bedroom unit in NYC. Even still, the piece came with a disclaimer.

"The sale of malware for operational purposes is illegal in the United States. As a buyer, you recognize that this work represents a potential security hazard. By submitting a bid you agree and acknowledge that you're purchasing this work as a piece of art or for academic reasons, and have no intention of disseminating any malware," reads the notice.

The buyer has remained anonymous, but Dong [reports planning](#) on using the money from the auction in two possible ways: a future art project or burning it.

"I think it's fascinating. Depending on how you want to look at it, this piece could be considered an exhibit of historical weaponry. These pieces of malware were specifically chosen in many cases for the monetary loss that they caused. What does it mean that someone wants to pay so much to acquire this object?" he said.

It's estimated that [25% of organizations](#) never test their disaster recovery systems. Something that they don't think of until disaster strikes. In putting six disasters on one computer, Dong hopes this piece will serve as a reminder that digital threats are very real by providing the world with a look at a [tangible version](#) of seemingly abstract technological threats.