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By [Joris Evers](#)

December 7, 2001 6:41 am PT

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A FLAW IN the Outlook Web Access module in Microsoft's Exchange 5.5 e-mail system could allow unauthorized access to user's mailboxes, the company warned late Thursday.

The problem lies in the way Outlook Web Access handles inline script in HTML e-mail messages, Microsoft said in a [security](#) bulletin. An attacker can get full control over a mailbox when his e-mail with embedded malicious code is opened using Microsoft's Internet Explorer browser and Outlook Web Access, Microsoft said.

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Although the attacker can delete mailbox contents, move messages, and send messages as if they were the user, it isn't possible to send e-mail to addresses in the user's address book, preventing a mass-mailing attack, Microsoft said.

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Outlook Web Access allows users to access their e-mail via the Web, rather than using the Outlook client software on their PC.

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Microsoft is having a tough time securing Outlook Web Access. In June it took the company three patches to plug a similar hole. The first and second patches for the hole, which affected both Exchange 2000 [Server](#) and Exchange 5.5, left administrators with dysfunctional e-mail systems.

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Microsoft, which gives the vulnerability a "moderate" severity rating, urges administrators who have deployed Outlook Web Access to immediately install a patch to fix the flaw. The patch is available from Microsoft's TechNet Web site.

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Microsoft's [security](#) bulletin can be viewed on the Web at:  
[www.microsoft.com/technet/security/bulletin/MS01-057.asp](http://www.microsoft.com/technet/security/bulletin/MS01-057.asp)

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