

Re: [SLE] adobe acrobat alternative

Source: <http://linux.derkeiler.com/Mailing-Lists/SuSE/2005-02/2715.html>

From: Randall R Schulz (*rschulz_at_sonic.net*)

Date: 02/26/05

To: suse-linux-e@suse.com

Date: Sat, 26 Feb 2005 08:33:17 -0800

Danny,

On Saturday 26 February 2005 08:33, Danny Sauer wrote:

> On Friday 25 February 2005 04:16 pm, Randall R Schulz wrote:

> [...]

>

>> (*) *The one weakness I've experienced more than any other on my*

>> *SuSE Linux system is its vulnerability to a rogue process consuming*

>> *so much memory that everything else gets swapped out and it becomes*

>> *impossible to even kill the errant process.*

>

> *Clearly, you need more memory. :) Most modern system will accept*

> *2GB, if not 4 or more. You should have time to kill acroread before*

> *it fills up 2GB of physical memory.*

I have 1 GB. Brute force cannot be the right way to address this problem. Besides, a run-away program can easily consume all the RAM and start driving swap activity much more quickly than a human user could recognize the problem and attempt to stop it. In fact, by the time there is any indication of a problem, it's pretty much too late already. Furthermore, such processes often are not responding to the messages triggered by clicking the close box or typing ALT-F4, forcing one to run ps or activate the KDE System Guard process table attached to CTRL-ESC. And finally, the X11 process that mediates keyboard and mouse activity is affected, too, making any corrective action whatsoever impossible.

The upshot is that this is a genuine vulnerability that cannot be solved by throwing memory at the system.

> --Danny, noting that the kernel starts killing processes when it runs

> out of memory...

That might be helpful if I had no swap space, in which case the swap (or paging) activity that makes the system unusable would never occur.

The simple empirical fact is that a process that exhibits extreme and

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unbounded memory consumptive behavior has on several occasions left me with no alternative but to press the mainboard's reset switch.

Randall Schulz

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