Rob Rosenberger, the well-respected (and sometimes detested) co-founder of Vmyths.com, is going the Persian Gulf to serve the nation in his capacity as an Air Force reservist and professional military historian. With his colleagues Eric Robichaud and Dr George C. Smith (author of the famous book, _The Virus Creation Labs_), Rosenberger has been publishing factual analysis of viruses, virus hoaxes, and marketing hyperbole since 1988. The Vmyths site is known as a reliable source of information for debunking scary stories about non-existent threats (e.g., the “jdbgmgr.exe” virus hoax, which tricks gullible victims into deleting a perfectly normal operating system file – just like the old “sulfnbk.exe” hoax of 2001). More dangerously for the Vmyths crew, they also regularly puncture exaggerated press releases from incompetent antivirus-company market droids with only the faintest notion of the technical details they include in their alarmist news releases about the latest End-of-the-Internet-Virus/Worm attacks and why their company’s products are the only solution to prevent the End-of-the-Internet. Then they proceed to enrage news organizations whose reporters believe that publishing news stories can legitimately consist of adapting press releases from vendors without checking any facts.

The bad news for all of us who depend on the site for accurate analysis of malicious software news is that Vmyths long ago ran out of money and may close permanently.

Rosenberger has steadfastly refused ever to accept advertising from antivirus companies because of the conflict of interest that such dependence would cause. For example, his research on the astounding story about how the antivirus industry supplied live virus code to the government of China back in 2000 (see “The China Syndrome”) caused such a ruckus that Rosenberger was asked by US government officials not to publish an article specifically identifying a particular company as a chief actor in the scheme (see “Replacement Column” for details).

I feel strongly that losing Vmyths would be a serious blow to all of us who benefit from its irreverent independence and intelligence (in all senses of the word). I call on my readers to mobilize their pocketbooks and their marketing departments to help save this site from stasis and oblivion by

(a) Contributing directly to the fund (see “Vmyths needs your support”) as I just have via a link on their Web site;
(b) Contacting Eric Robichaud (phone +1.401.767.3106 x221) to discuss advertising and sponsorship on the site.

In addition, if there are any venture capitalists out there, Vmyths could do with a solid infusion of capital to establish an endowment, so think about that too.

In the meantime, I wish Rob all the best as he travels to the Gulf and hope that he (and all the troops) will return safely home soon.
For further reading:

About VMYTHS < http://www.vmyths.com/about/index.cfm >


jdbgmgr.exe virus hoax < http://www.vmyths.com/hoax.cfm?id=275&page=3 >


Vmyths needs your support. < http://vmyths.com/resource.cfm?id=84&page=1 >


M. E. Kabay, PhD, CISSP is Associate Professor in the Department of Computer Information Systems at Norwich University in Northfield, VT. Mich can be reached by e-mail at <mailto:mkabay@norwich.edu>; Web site at < http://www.mekabay.com/index.htm >.

Copyright © 2003 M. E. Kabay. All rights reserved.

Permission is hereby granted to _Network World_ to distribute this article at will, to post it without limit on any Web site, and to republish it in any way they see fit.