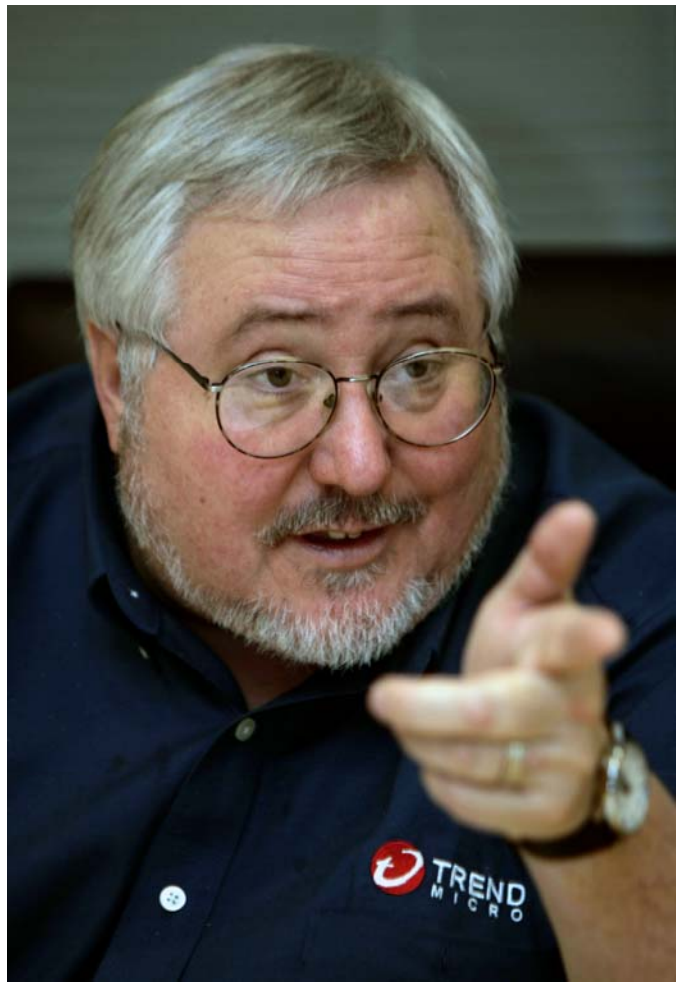
The STRANGE case of Judith C.

I was in Hollywood one day…

- Earlier this year I appeared on CNN



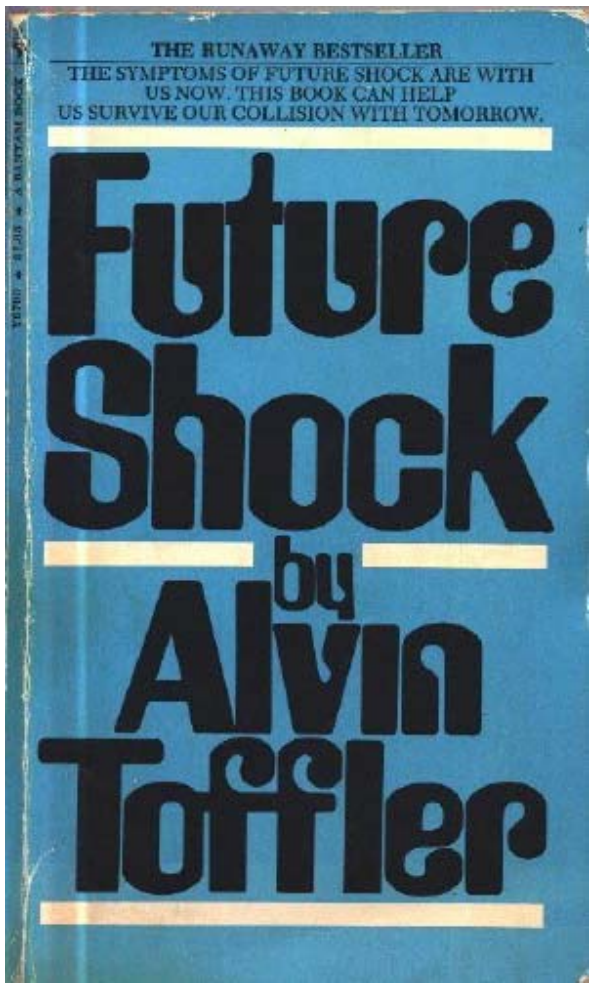
And I received a phone call…

- **Judith C wanted me to know that her small business was being destroyed by adware and spyware**
- **She was very distraught**
- **I asked her if she had any evidence**

Every single day, we get distraught people…

- Computer viruses represent an unknown and distinctly frightening threat to people
- People believe in the viruses they see in the movies and television, viruses to them have ***mythic*** resonance
- But mainly, the reason that viruses make people very upset has more to do with the work of a 1970 Canadian college professor

FUTURE SHOCK



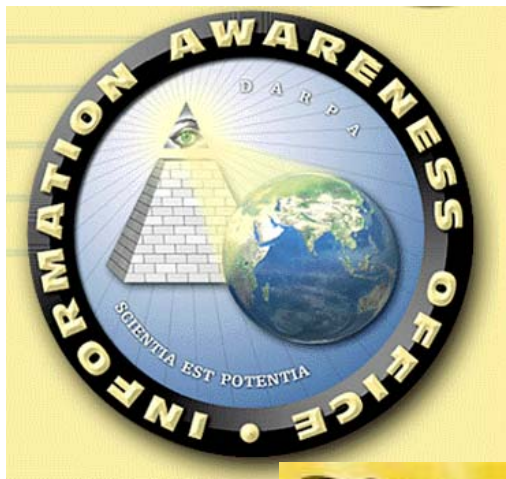
FUTURE SHOCK- quotes from Alvin Toffler

- Future shock is the shattering stress and disorientation that we induce in individuals by subjecting them to too much change in too short a time.
- The illiterate of the 21st century will not be those who cannot read and write, but those who cannot learn, unlearn, and relearn.
- One of the definitions of sanity is the ability to tell real from unreal. Soon we'll need a new definition.

Modern Life is complicated

- So people invent simple theories to explain things they do not understand

People see conspiracies everywhere!

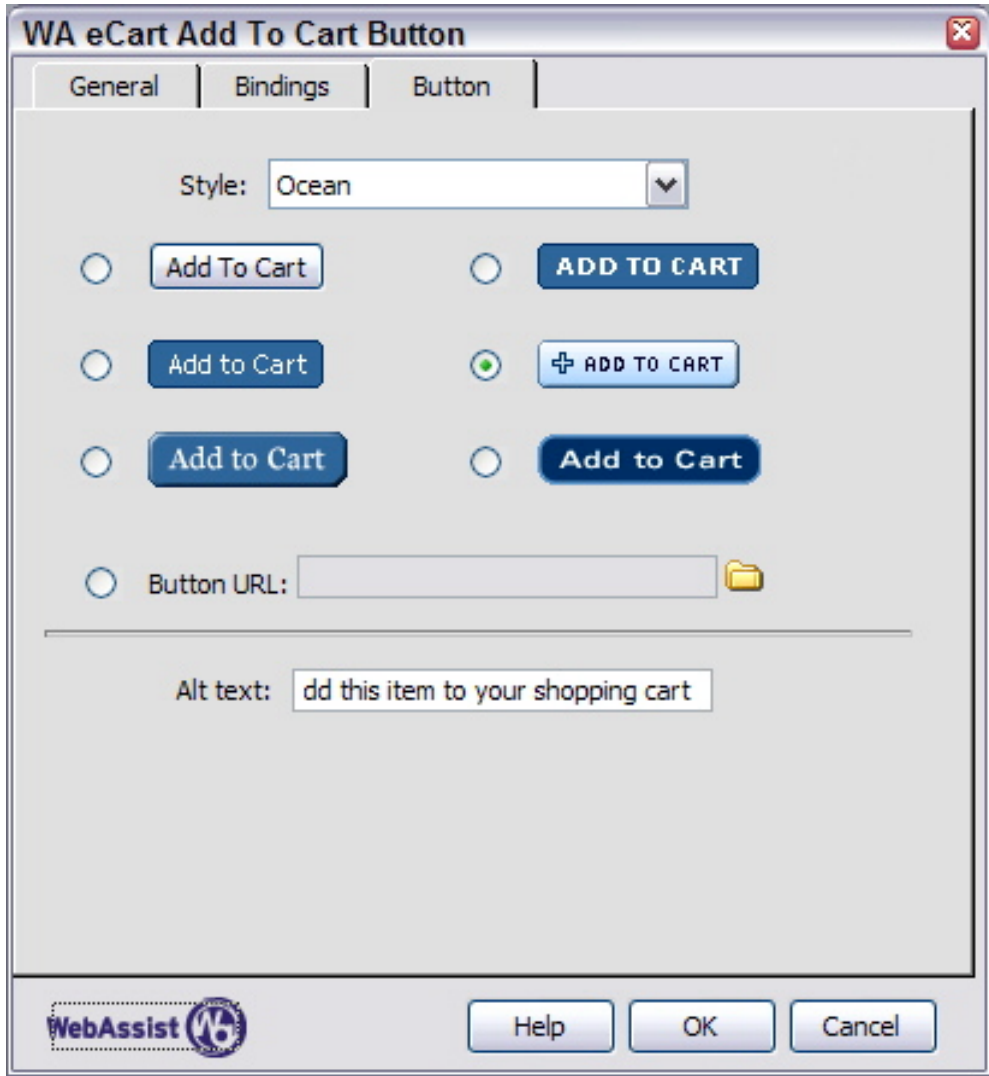


Judith C can't believe what is happening to her

- She faxed me almost 20 pages of evidence
- Pictures of her web based business as seen by both infected and non infected systems
- Apparently, Spyware companies were pasting false links on her pages at the behest of her competitors, stealing away her customers

Can this be happening?

- Is it possible that the “add to shopping cart” button is really a gateway to another vendor?



Can this be happening?

- Can pop-ups be targeted to steal customers from specific websites?
- Can false links be overlaid on selected words in a vendor's page?
- In short, **Can automation destroy one's small business?**
- The short answer is YES
- *But to what extent is this possible?*

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This is an ongoing study, part of a larger trend

- An online shoestore almost went out of business from the google dance..
- The multitude of security shortfalls makes simple answers impossible
- This story is already too confusing for US (the av industry) to track effectively
- Fingerpointing won't help…

There's something happening here….

- Although our traditional approach has been to combat malware on the desktop, it's time to start thinking of the *whole system* in which malware operates.
- Is it safe to do business in a world where malware might target you, your customer, your supplier or others?
- Quis custodiet ipsos custodes?
- Is anti-malware enough?

Judith C is like Josef K

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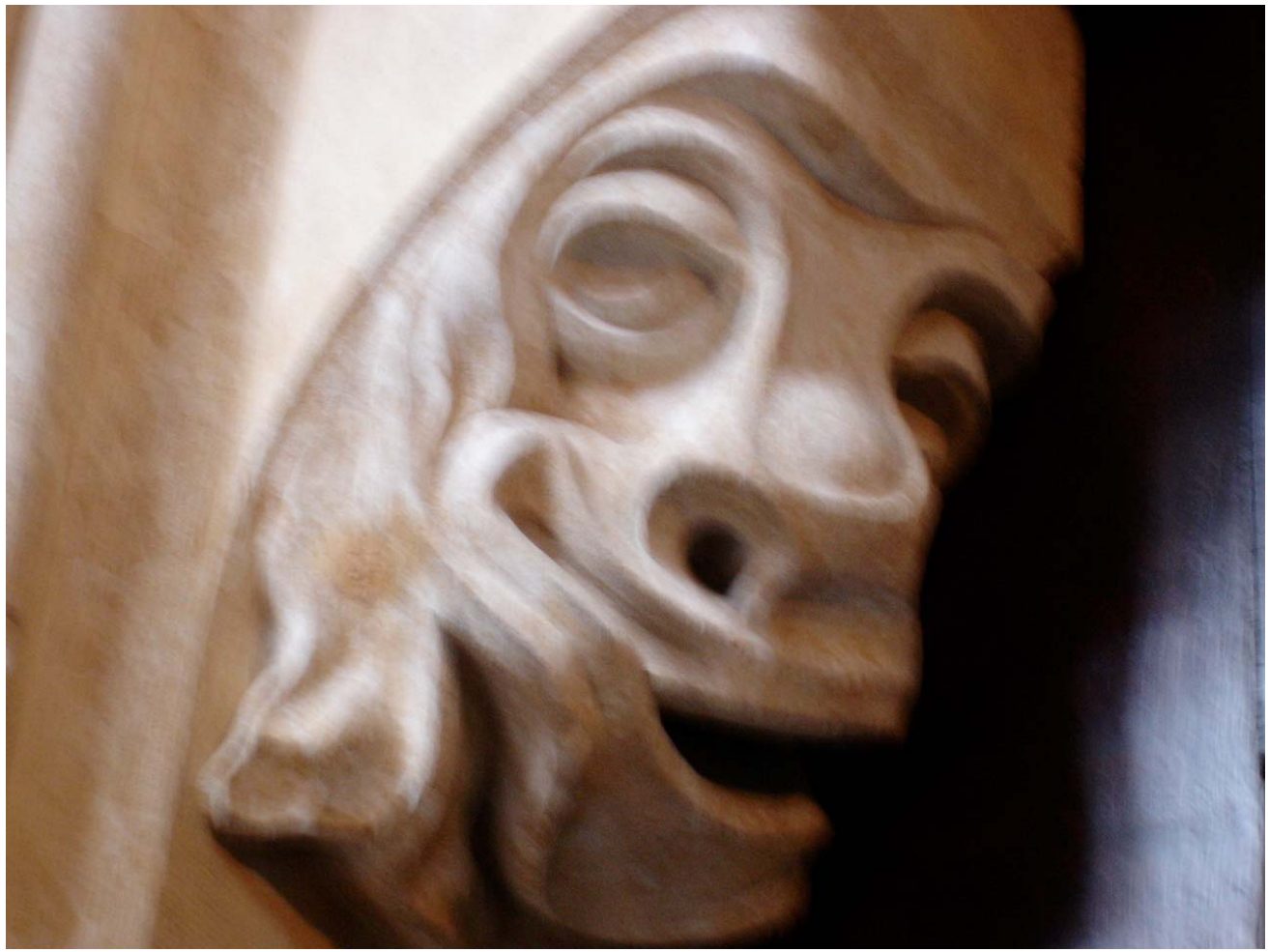

Judith C is like Josef K

TREND MICRO

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The 3 M (not to be confused with the company of the same name) theory

MALWARE

MISUNDERSTANDING

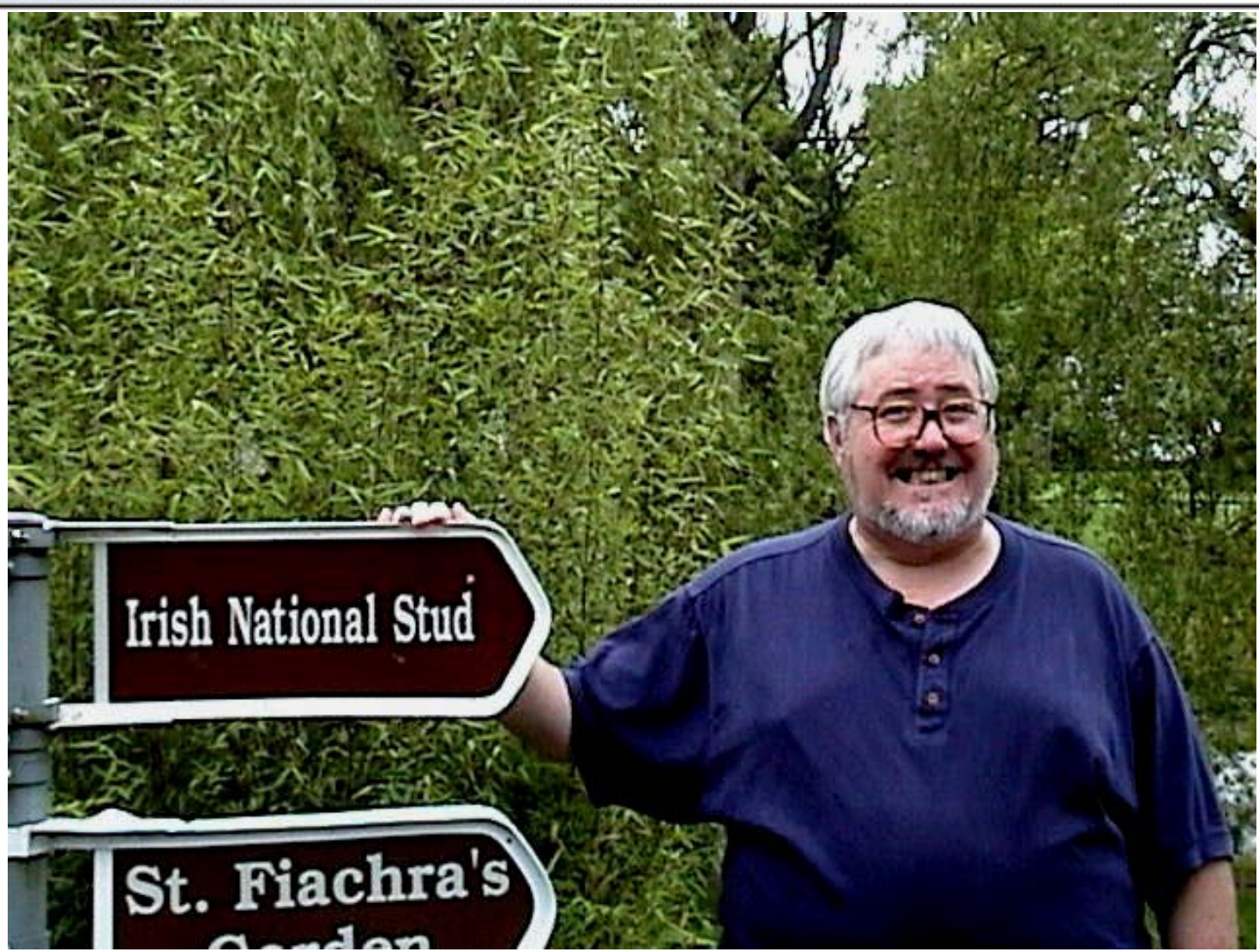
MADNESS

DO WE PUT ASIDE THE CLAIMS OF USERS?

What about OUR problems?

- Engineers tend to want to fix the problem by defining it out of existence…
- Nobody wants to take on the whole world
- Blaming ‘dumb users’ does not help anyone
- Are we dealing in private language?

At the end of the day

- Judith C's failure is OUR failure
- User education is a two way street
- This cannot get better unless better things are done

Thank you very much!