

Cars safe from computer viruses

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After exhaustive testing Finnish security firm F-Secure has failed to make a virus leap from a mobile phone handset to a car's onboard communications system.

F-Secure did the tests in response to rumours that some Lexus cars had been infected by a virus.

But the phone system on the vehicle did not respond to any of the attacks tried out by F-Secure researchers.

Many security firms fear that the increasing number of computers and communications system on cars will eventually make them vulnerable to the viruses that plague desktop machines.

In January this year stories began circulating that some models of Lexus Landcruiser, particularly the LX470 and LS430, were vulnerable to phone viruses that travel via the Bluetooth short-range radio system.

The vehicles use Bluetooth so owners can use their phone-based address book with the in-car phone.

Toyota issued a statement saying that its in-car communications system could not be infected because it did not use the Symbian operating system - which the mobile phone viruses exploit.

However, Finnish security firm F-Secure decided to put the claims to the test and subjected a Toyota car to a barrage of phone virus attacks.

The F-Secure researchers used phones compromised with the Cabir virus to see if they would infect the car too. All the attempts at infection failed.

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