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Government spooks helped Microsoft build Vista

Helping a Vole out of a hole

By [Nick Farrell](#): Tuesday, 09 January 2007, 2:26 PM

THE USA GOVERNMENT'S cryptologic organisation, the National Security Agency, has admitted that it is behind some of the security changes to Microsoft's operating system Vista.

According to the [Washington Post](#), the agency which was once so secret that it was jokingly referred to as 'No such Agency' has admitted making 'unspecified contributions' to Vista.

Tony Sager, the NSA's chief of vulnerability analysis and operations group, told the Post that it was the agency's intention to help everyone these days.

The NSA used a red and a blue team to pull apart the software. The red team posed as "the determined, technically competent adversary" to disrupt, corrupt or steal information. The Blue team helped Defense Department system administrators with Vista's configuration.

Vole said that it has sought help from the NSA over the last four years. Apparently its skills can be seen in the Windows XP consumer version and the Windows Server 2003 for corporate customers.

The assistance is at the US taxpayers' expense, although the NSA says it all makes perfect sense. Not only is the NSA protecting United States business, its own Defense Department uses VoleWare so it is in the government's interest to make sure it is as secure as possible.

Microsoft is not the only one to tap the spooks. Apple, with its Mac OSX operating system, and Novell with its SUSE Linux also asked the NSA what it thought of their products. The NSA is quite good at finding weapons of mass destruction that are not there.

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