

## BIG sabotage: Famous npm package deletes files to protest Ukraine war

By Ax Sharma

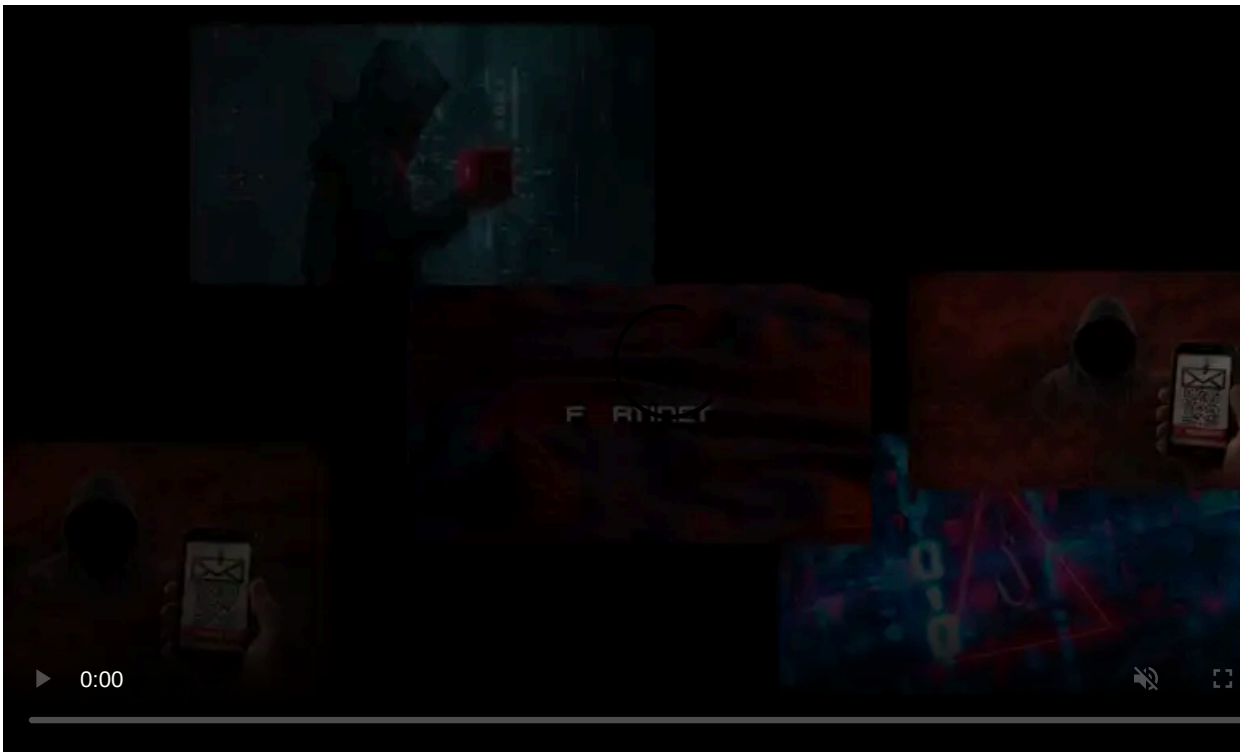
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This month, the developer behind the popular npm package 'node-ipc' released sabotaged versions of the library in protest of the ongoing Russo-Ukrainian War.

Newer versions of the 'node-ipc' package began deleting all data and overwriting all files on developer's machines, in addition to creating new text files with "peace" messages.

With over **a million weekly downloads**, 'node-ipc' is a prominent package used by major libraries like Vue.js CLI.





```
WITH-LOVE-FROM-AMERICA.txt x
1 War is not the answer, no matter how bad it is. War brings tragedy and destruction,
2 robbing generations of precious moments and hope for the future.
3 The goal should always be peace.
4 The soldier puts on their boots for their country, obeying the orders of their
5 government.
6 Find the strength to forgive, come together, and stand up to real injustice and evil.
7 We are all connected through humanity and only separated because of geographic lines.
8 We may feel insignificant as individuals but when enough people act with the same
9 intention, we create big movements.
10 Do what you think is right, follow your own morals.
11 May God bless you and your family. Stay safe.
12 https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=WrmBChQjZPs
13 -----
14 Война — это не выход, как бы плохо это ни было. Война несет с собой трагедии и
15 разрушения, отнимая у поколений драгоценные мгновения и надежду на будущее.
16 Целью всегда должен быть мир.
17 Солдат надевает сапоги за свою страну, подчиняясь приказам своего правительства.
18 Найдите в себе силы простить, собраться и противостоять настоящей несправедливости и злу.
19 Мы все связаны человечеством и разделены только географическими линиями.
20 Мы можем чувствовать себя незначительными как личности, но когда достаточное количество
21 людей действует с одним и тем же намерением, мы создаем большие движения.
```

### WITH-LOVE-FROM-AMERICA.txt file with multilingual 'peace' messages

Researchers at open source security firm Snyk also tracked and analyzed the malicious activity:

"At this point, a very clear abuse and a critical supply chain security incident will occur for any system on which this npm package will be called upon, if that matches a geo-location of either Russia or Belarus," writes Liran Tal, Director of Developer Advocacy at Snyk in a [blog post](#).

### Vue.js users panic over supply chain attack

Popular JavaScript front end framework 'Vue.js' also uses 'node-ipc' as a dependency. But prior to this incident, 'Vue.js' did not pin the versions of 'node-ipc' dependency to a safe version and was set up to fetch the latest minor and patch versions instead, as evident from the caret (^) symbol:

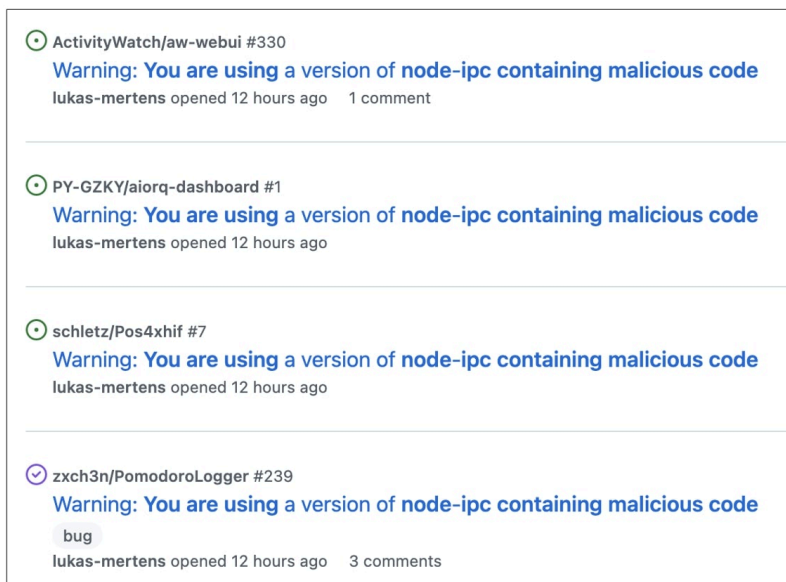
```
fix: lock node-ipc version
dev
v5.0.3 v5.0.2
sodatea committed 2 days ago Verified 1 parent 4c679ec commit 37ef809c873f33c88ba7928fca785e87bfaf2491
Showing 3 changed files with 27 additions and 6 deletions.
Split Unified
packages/@vue/cli-shared-utils/package.json
@@ -26,7 +26,7 @@
26 26 "launch-editor": "^2.2.1",
27 27 "lru-cache": "^6.0.0",
28 28 "node-fetch": "^2.6.7",
29 - "node-ipc": "^9.1.1",
29 + "node-ipc": "9.2.1",
30 30 "open": "^8.0.2",
31 31 "ora": "^5.3.0",
32 32 "read-pkg": "^5.1.1",
packages/@vue/cli-ui/package.json
@@ -53,7 +53,7 @@
53 53 "lodash.merge": "^4.6.1",
54 54 "lowdb": "^1.0.0",
55 55 "lru-cache": "^6.0.0",
56 - "node-ipc": "^9.1.1",
56 + "node-ipc": "9.2.1",
```

### Versions of Vue.js CLI previously pulled latest minor and patch versions of node-ipc

As such, Vue.js CLI users [made an urgent appeal](#) to the project's maintainers to pin the 'node-ipc' dependency to a safe version, after some were left [startled](#).

And, as observed by BleepingComputer, Vue.js isn't the only open source project to be impacted by this sabotage.

Developers Lukas Mertens and [Fedor](#) are warning other project maintainers to make sure they are not on a malicious 'node-ipc' version:



### Lukas Mertens warns repo owners using malicious 'node-ipc' versions (GitHub)

Snyk researchers suspect that 'node-ipc' versions 10.1.1 and 10.1.2 that cause blatant damage to the system were taken down by npm within 24 hours of publication.

Note, however, 'node-ipc' versions [11.0.0 and above](#) remain available on npm. And, these versions [still contain the \*peacenotwar\* module](#) that will create the aforementioned 'WITH-LOVE-FROM-AMERICA.txt' files on Desktop.

As such, if your application is built using the 'node-ipc' library, make sure to pin the dependency to a safe version such as 9.2.1 (turns out [9.2.2](#) isn't innocent either).

### Incident upsets open source community

This marks the second major incident of protest by an open source developer this year, following January's ['colors' and 'fakers' self-sabotage incident](#), as first reported by BleepingComputer.

In the case of 'colors', its developer Marak Squires drew mixed reactions from the open source community because his manner of protest involved breaking thousands of applications by introducing infinite loops within them.

However, the move by *RIAEvangelist*, who maintains [over 40 packages on npm](#), has drawn sharp criticism for going beyond just "peaceful protest" and actively deploying destructive payloads in a popular library without any warning to honest users.

A GitHub user [called](#) it "a huge damage" to the credibility of the whole open source community.

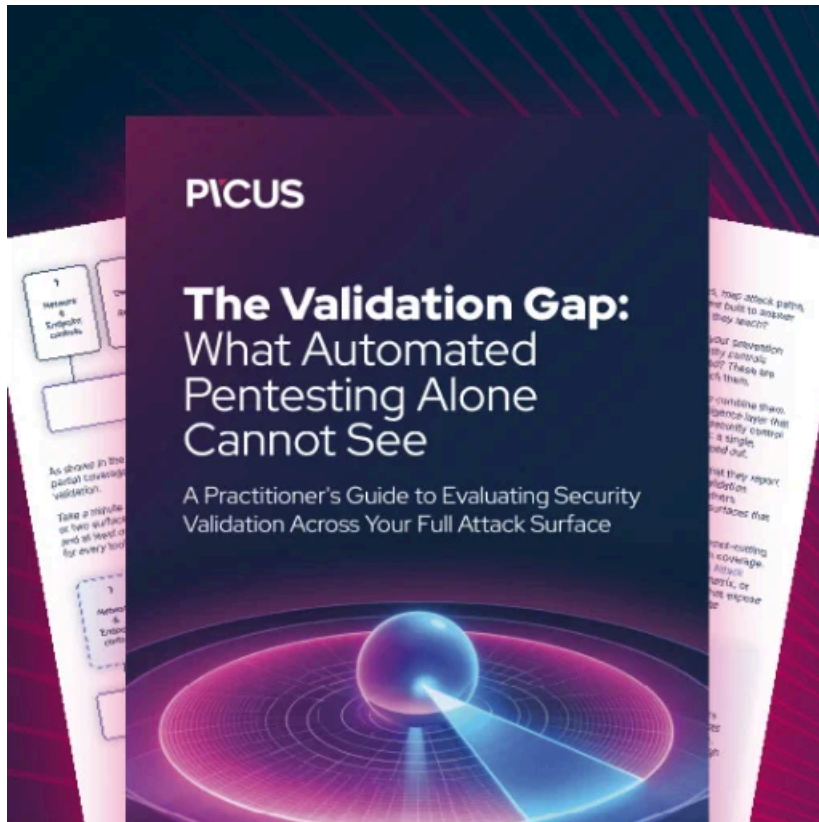
"This behavior is beyond f\*\*\*\* up. Sure, war is bad, but that doesn't make this behavior (e.g. deleting all files for Russia/Belarus users and creating strange file in desktop folder) justified. F\*\*\* you, go to hell. You've just successfully ruined the open-source community. You happy now *@RIAEvangelist*?" [asked](#) another.

Some called out the 'node-ipc' developer for trying to "cover up" his tracks by persistently editing and deleting [previous comments](#) on the thread [\[1, 2, 3\]](#).

"Even if the deliberate and dangerous act of maintainer *RIAEvangelist* will be perceived by some as a legitimate act of protest. How does that reflect on the maintainer's future reputation and stake in the developer community?" asks Snyk's Tal.

Developers should exercise caution before using 'node-ipc' in their applications as there is no assurance that future versions of this or any library released by *RIAEvangelist* will be safe.

Pinning your dependencies to a trusted version is one of the ways of protecting your applications against such supply chain attacks.



### [Automated Pentesting Covers Only 1 of 6 Surfaces.](#)

Automated pentesting proves the path exists. BAS proves whether your controls stop it. Most teams run one without the other.

This whitepaper maps six validation surfaces, shows where coverage ends, and provides practitioners with three diagnostic questions for any tool evaluation.

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Source: <https://www.bleepingcomputer.com/news/security/big-sabotage-famous-npm-package-deletes-files-to-protest-ukraine-war/>