

Computer 'virus' hits Perth

PERTH has been infected by a computer "virus" which is invading systems and software worth thousands of dollars.

The European-developed bug reached WA on computer discs made in Europe and imported from the U.S.

By SCOTT BRANDRETH

A "computer virus" is a self-propagating set of commands devised by a saboteur and copied automatically from one computer disk to another, gradually consuming more and

more valuable memory space.

It has already infected a computer system and software owned by a major Perth company and hundreds of privately owned personal systems.

WA Scientific Society chairman Wilf Prendergast said computer "hackers" calling

themselves the Swiss Cracking Association had created the virus programme.

The virus takes the form of a message from the hackers which appears on the computer terminal screen when an "infected" programme is being used.

"WEST AUSTRALIAN" 14/1/88

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THE WEST

Cure found for disc virus

AN ANTIDOTE to a "virus" sweeping Perth Amiga computers has been found.

A spokesman for Perth's largest Amiga retailer said a renegade group which created the virus programme — the Swiss Cracking Association — produced the antidote.

But even as Amiga users breathe a sigh of relief, industry sources say a second, more insidious "virus" affecting IBM personal computers has reached Australia.

The Amiga scare has promp-

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ted Australian software distributors to check all new stock from America and Europe.

There are fears that Australian-made software has also been infected and a massive clean-up has begun.

The spokesman for the Amiga retailer said the distributor had not known about the virus until his company had spotted it.

He admitted his company was battling to keep the virus quarantined before the anti-

dote could be duplicated and distributed.

The company received the antidote last week.

"All information on the antidote virus disc is in German, with some English translations," he said.

The antidote includes a greeting from the Swiss Crackers Association to other international hacker organisations, including an Australian group called the "ACS".

"Many games discs had the virus when they came and we

had to eradicate it ourselves," he said.

"Software houses duplicating computer programmes could have unknowingly received a master disc with a virus on it and started sending infected copies of the programme around the world."

The spokesman said many people had returned their infected software to have the virus killed.

"It's an embarrassment and we want to clean it up and forget about it as soon as possible," he said.