



Foxy: the good, the bad, and the ugly

Dr K P Chow & Computer Forensics Research Group
Center for Information Security and Cryptography
University of Hong Kong



Agenda

- Incidents related to Foxy
- What is Foxy?
- Foxy security questions:
 - ❑ Why so many personal and confidential documents available on Foxy?
 - ❑ Is it possible to trace who shares a copy of a document?
 - ❑ Is it possible to trace the seeder of a document
 - ❑ Once a document is available on Foxy, can it be removed?



Incidents that related to Foxy



Case 26/05/2008 : Police confidential information leakage

- On May 26, 2008, police confidential and classified documents discovered by Foxy 天王
- The documents include information on three undercover police officers who have bought illegal substances in a dubious Mong Kok disco and cars used by people suspected of thefts from motor vehicles in Wong Tai Sin
- And more ...



Foxy 天王再爆三大部門秘料

上週四，入境處十六份監聽黑名單的機密文件在搜尋器 FOXY 外洩，震動整個港府。翌日特首曾蔭權下令入境處要即時整頓，處長白韞六公開宣布已把所有機密資料剷走，確保不再外洩。不過，同一名爆料人繼續在 FOX...



Case 08/05/2008 : HK Immigration Department “watchlist” partially leaked onto website

- The PC of the employee in Immigration Department has the Foxy installed
- When he connected to the Internet, the files were distributed without his knowledge

共 1 張，顯示第 1 張



入境處機密文件外泄 網上任睇
(星島) 05月 08日 星期四 05:30AM

(綜合報道)

(星島日報 報道)市民私隱外泄事件愈鬧愈大，入境處多份機密文件被發現上載至FOXY點對點分享平台，當中包括列入入境監視黑名單人士名稱、投訴人資料、檢查護照的機密細節等。

入境處表示，初步調查顯示，懷疑有職員未有遵守指引處理須保護的資料，該處正進

放大

Case 05/04/2008 : Police internal information leakage

- On Apr 5, 2008, MingPao reported that users can use the keywords “pol”, “fpm” etc to search for internal information of Hong Kong Police
- These information include internal forms, procedures manual, promotion exam questions and answers, even the birthdates of some of the higher authorities.

FOXY軟件泄政府機密 警內部手冊 高官出生日期 一覽無遺



(明報) 04月 05日 星期六 05:05AM

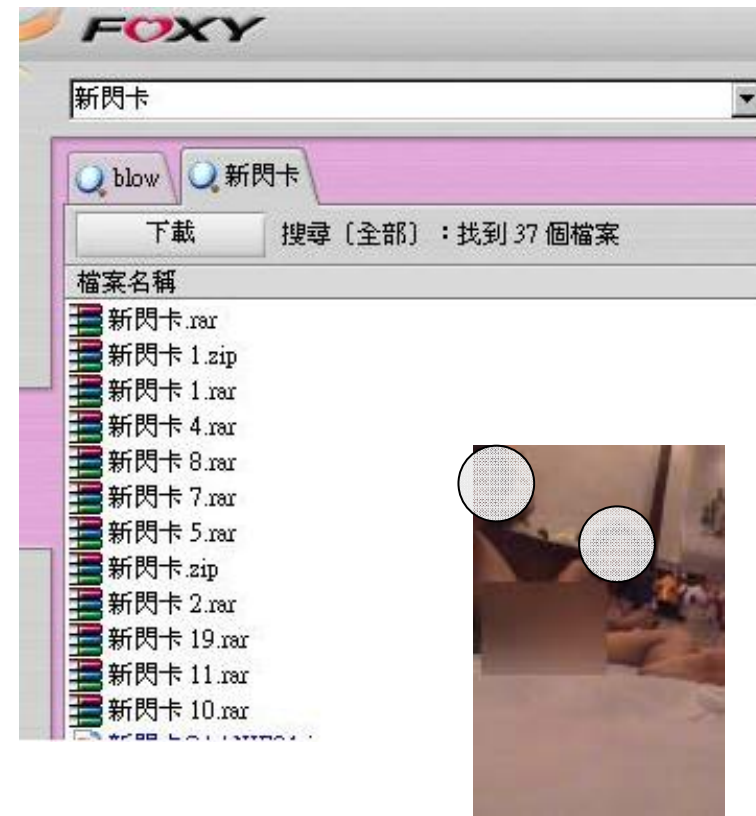
【明報專訊】讀者爆料指出，警方及民航處的內部及機密文件被人透過網民廣泛使用的FOXY共享軟件上下載，其中包括連議員都無法索取的警察內部《程序手冊》、疑為警長內部升級試的練習題及答案，甚至連民航處高官的出生日期等私隱資

廣告



Case 02/2008 : Edison Chen's scandal photos leakage

- On Feb 2008, Internet users use FOXY to share Edison's scandal photos:
 - Whenever new photos surface on the internet, they pass on the messages using the code: "hurry on bit the fox" and using the keyword "新閃卡"
 - Users share the files with names 新閃卡 by putting those files in their share folder
 - The photos spread rapidly on the Foxy network
- Law enforcement has tried to trace users who share the photos on the Foxy network



Does your home PC have Foxy installed?

Conditions	Chance of having Foxy installed (my guess)
If you have kid(s) from P.4 to S.3	$\geq 30\%$
If you have kid(s) from P.4 to S.3 and they have an iPod or MP3	$\geq 60\%$
If you have kid(s) from P.4 to S.3 and they have an iPod or MP3 and they have lots of new songs	$\geq 90\%$

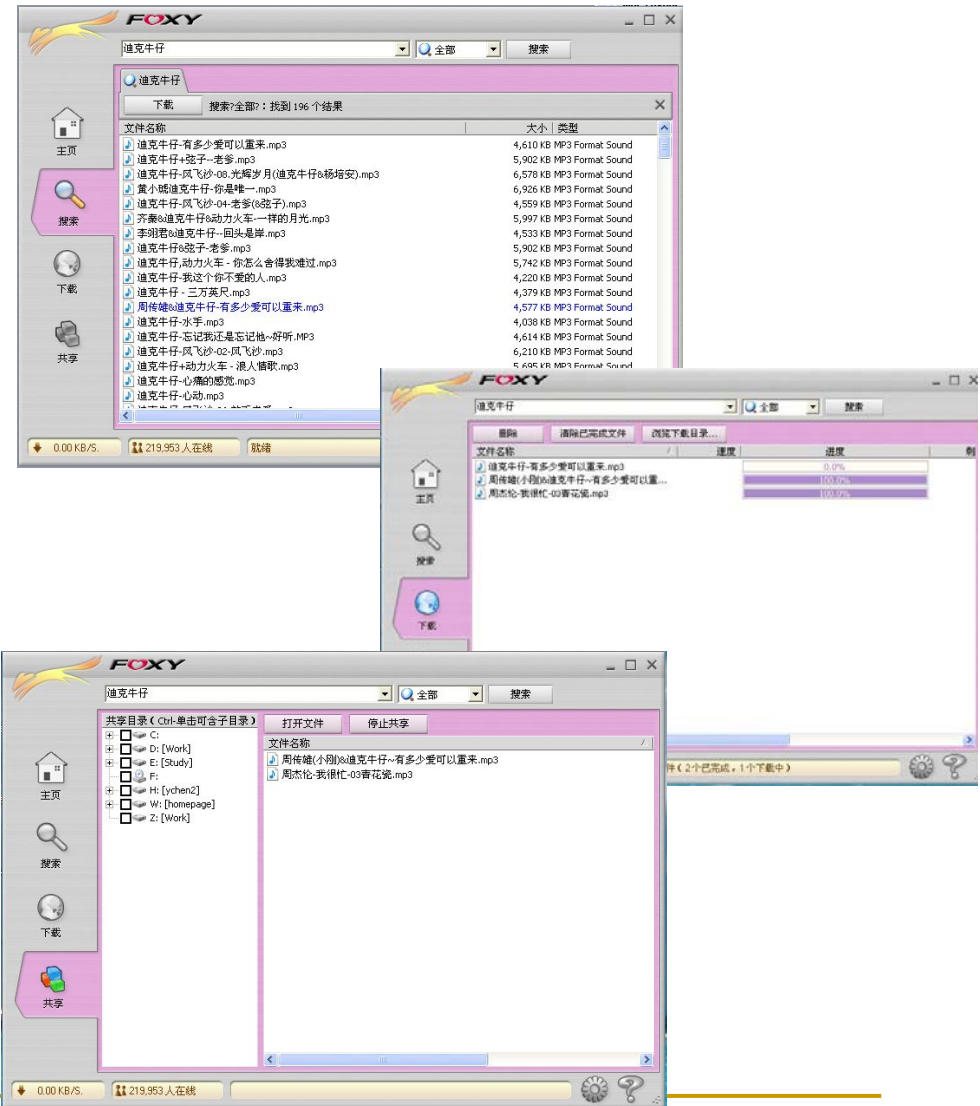


What is Foxy?



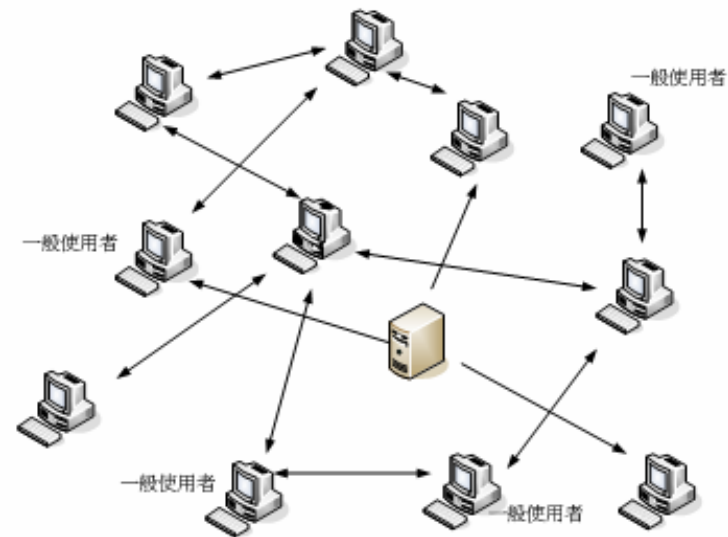
What is Foxy?

- Foxy
 - ❑ A Traditional Chinese peer to peer file transfer program
 - ❑ Initially published by Foxy Media, Inc.
 - ❑ Widely used in Hong Kong, Mainland China and Taiwan
 - ❑ Very popular in upper primary schools and secondary schools
- Unlike other P2P programs (such as eMule, BitTorrent), Foxy is
 - ❑ Very easy to use
 - ❑ Has unlimited download capabilities

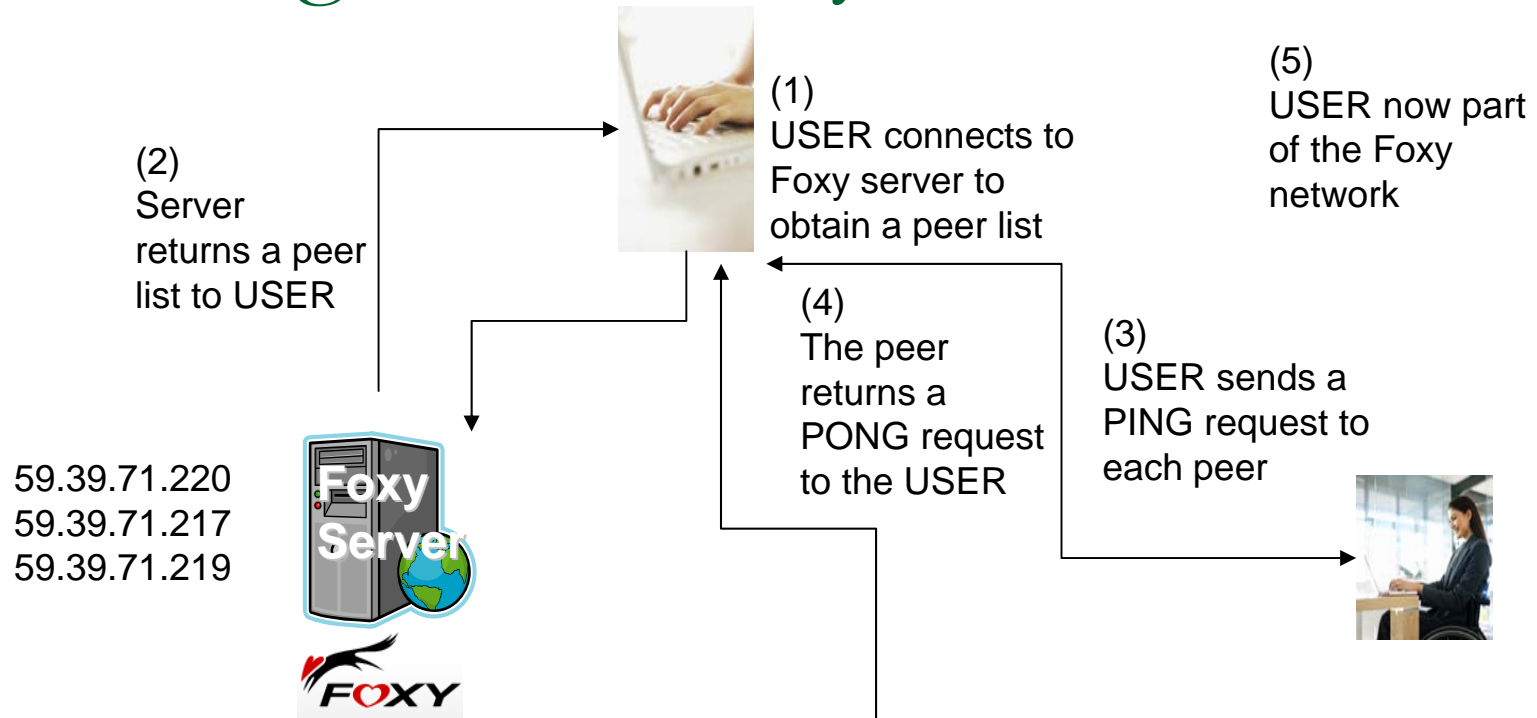


Foxy Architecture

1. Connecting to the Foxy network
2. Search for files on the Foxy network
 - Based on Gnutella 2 protocol
3. Download file from a peer
 - Based on http download



Connecting to the Foxy network



Do a sample keyword search

Keyword search using "confidential"

Search result indicates 40 files with "Confidential" are being shared.

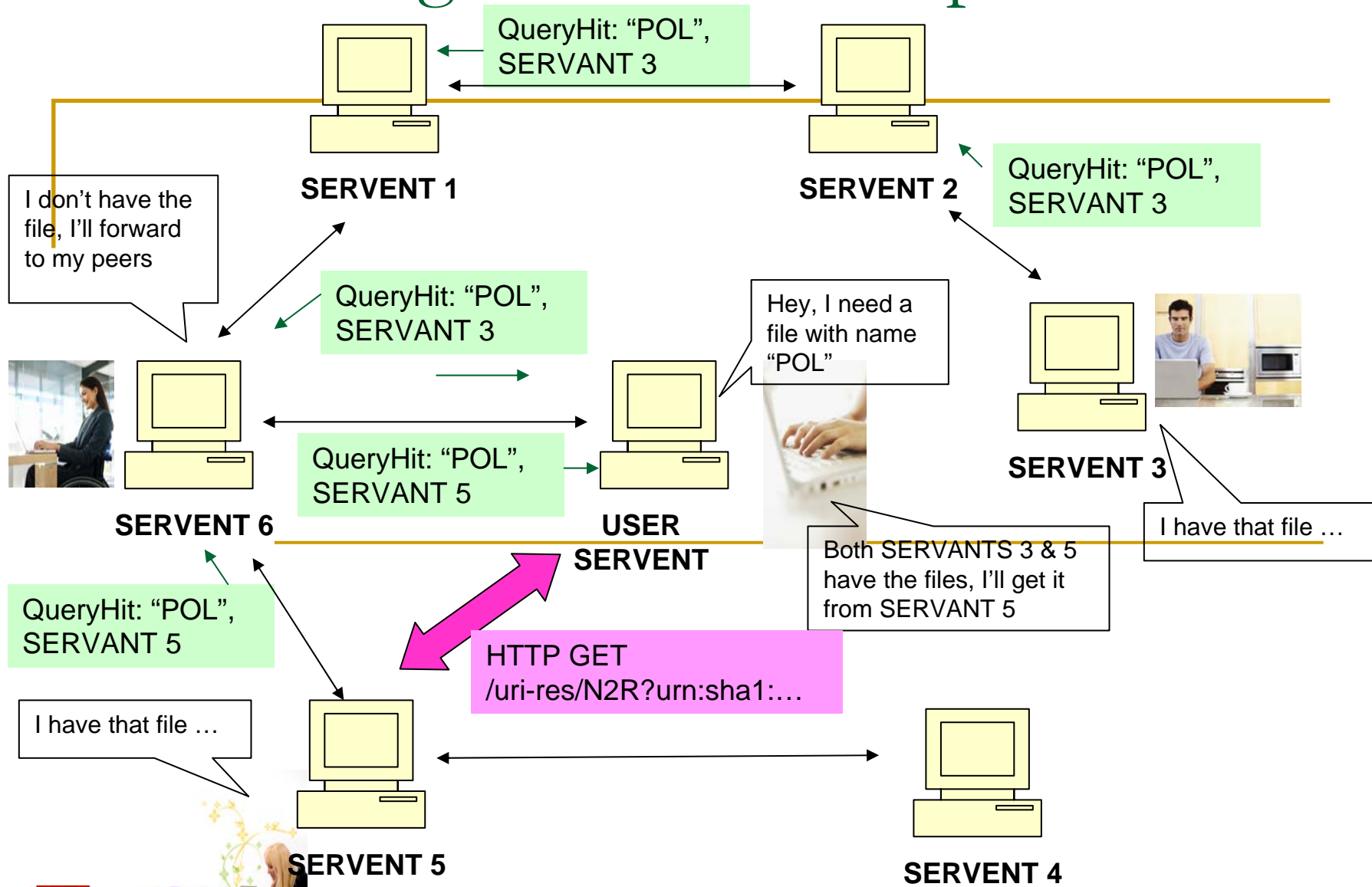
There are 182,810 people online when the search is performed.

The screenshot shows the FOXY search engine interface. The search bar contains the keyword "confidential". Below the search bar, a notification indicates "搜索?全部?: 找到 40 个结果" (Search? All?: Found 40 results). The search results are displayed in a table with columns for "文件名称" (File Name), "大小" (Size), and "类型" (Type). Several file names are circled in red, including "Private and Confidential 私人及机密文件.doc", "confidential(color).jpg", "confidential(color).bmp", "Private and Confidential 私人及机密文件 1.ptl.doc", "Private and Confidential 私人及机密文件 1.doc", "AIA -- Private and Confidential 私人及机密文件 1.doc", and "Private and Confidential 私人及机密文件 3.doc". The bottom status bar shows "182,810 人在线" (182,810 people online).

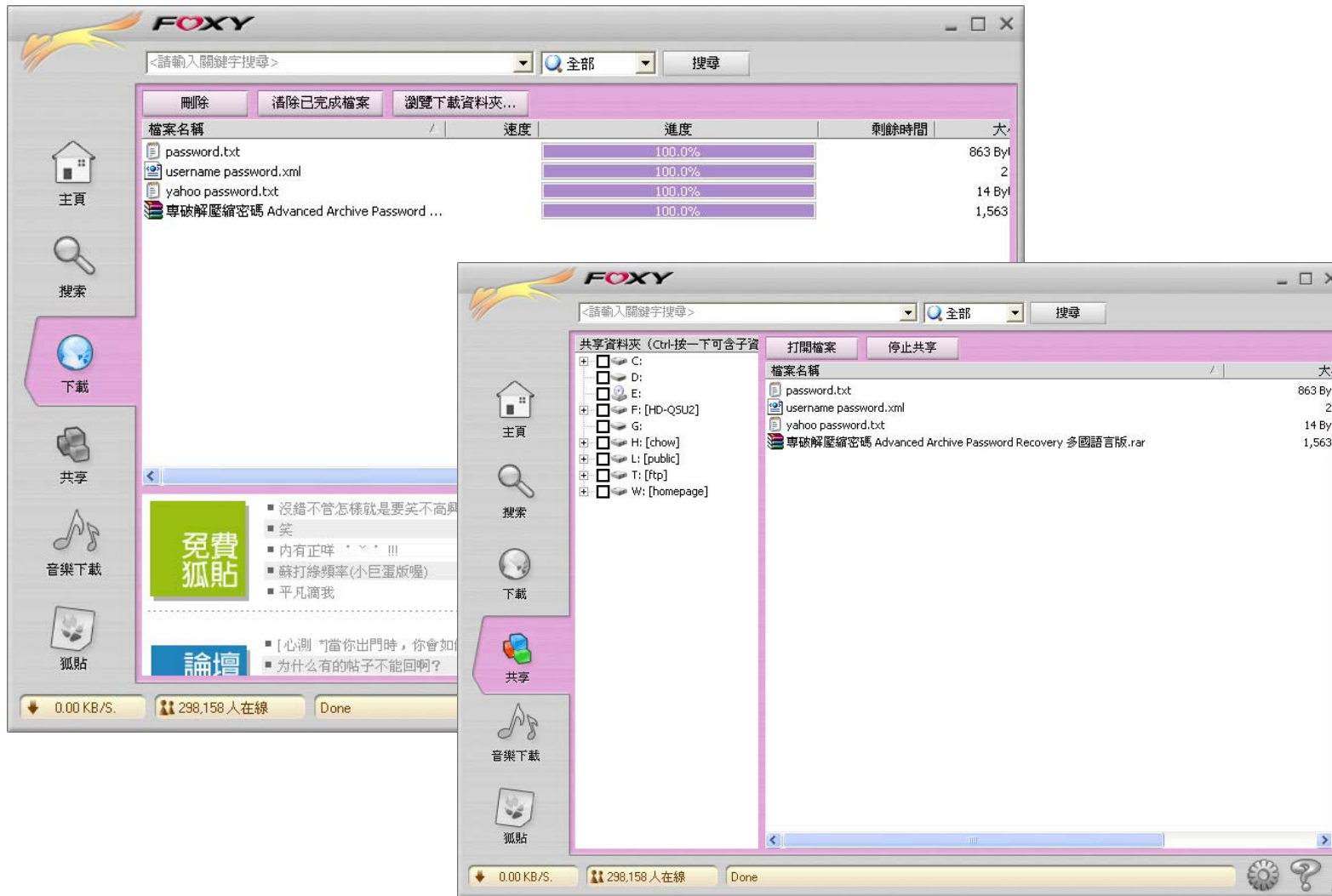
文件名称	大小	类型
Private and Confidential 私人及机密文件.doc	49 KB	Microsoft Word Documer
confidential(color).jpg	234 KB	JPEG Image
confidential(color).jpg	231 KB	JPEG Image
confidential.tif	2 KB	TIF File
confidential.cvr	2 KB	CVR File
confidential.bmp	14 KB	Bitmap Image
confidential(color).2.cvr	1 KB	CVR File
confidential(color).2.BMP	14 KB	Bitmap Image
confidential(color).cvr	1 KB	CVR File
confidential(color).bmp	14 KB	Bitmap Image
Private and Confidential 私人及机密文件 1.ptl.doc	45 KB	Microsoft Word Documer
Sasha Grey - Barefoot Confidential 50 - SPICE - by Bomkia.avi	191,374 KB	Video Clip
Private and Confidential 私人及机密文件 1.doc	45 KB	Microsoft Word Documer
AIA -- Private and Confidential 私人及机密文件 1.doc	46 KB	Microsoft Word Documer
~\$ivate and Confidential 私人及机密文件 1.doc	162 Bytes	Microsoft Word Documer
~\$ivate and Confidential 私人及机密文件 1.doc	162 Bytes	Microsoft Word Documer
Private and Confidential 私人及机密文件 3.doc	46 KB	Microsoft Word Documer
ICAC Confidential Assistant 6Sept07.htm	51 KB	HTML Document



Downloading a file from the peer



Sample download



Some Foxy Features

- Default installation starts Foxy automatically after user login
- Foxy allows upload/download of files using the “shared” folder
 - Default “shared” folder is “\Program Files\Foxy\Download”
 - Any other folder can be shared
- Foxy “shared” folder”:
 - All files in the “shared” folder(s) are shared with all other peers in the Foxy network
 - Once the initial setting has been set, all subsequent uses will use this setting as basis



Foxy Security Analysis



Speculations on Foxy Security

- User mistake: user copies confidential documents to the shared folder
- Misconfigured file sharing: user shares a folder that contains confidential documents
- Foxy security vulnerabilities due to program bugs
- Hackers insert backdoor (mark "C:" as shared folder) into Foxy and then distribute the hacked version
- Misconfigured file sharing inherited from previous users



Foxy Security Assessment

User mistake: user copies confidential documents to the shared folder	Very unlikely since so many incidents
Misconfigured file sharing: user shares a folder that contains confidential documents	Possible but unlikely
Foxy security vulnerabilities due to program bugs	Foxy Media officially denied
Hackers insert backdoor (mark "C:" as shared folder) into Foxy and then distribute the hacked version	Possible, need to find such hacked version (<u>poisoned default configuration</u>)
Misconfigured file sharing inherited from previous users	Likely if no other reason can be found (<u>inherited configuration</u>)



Should I remove Foxy?

- Naïve approach: YES
- Our team's approach:
 - Identify the cause of the problem
 - Find the root of the problem
 - Fix the root of the problem

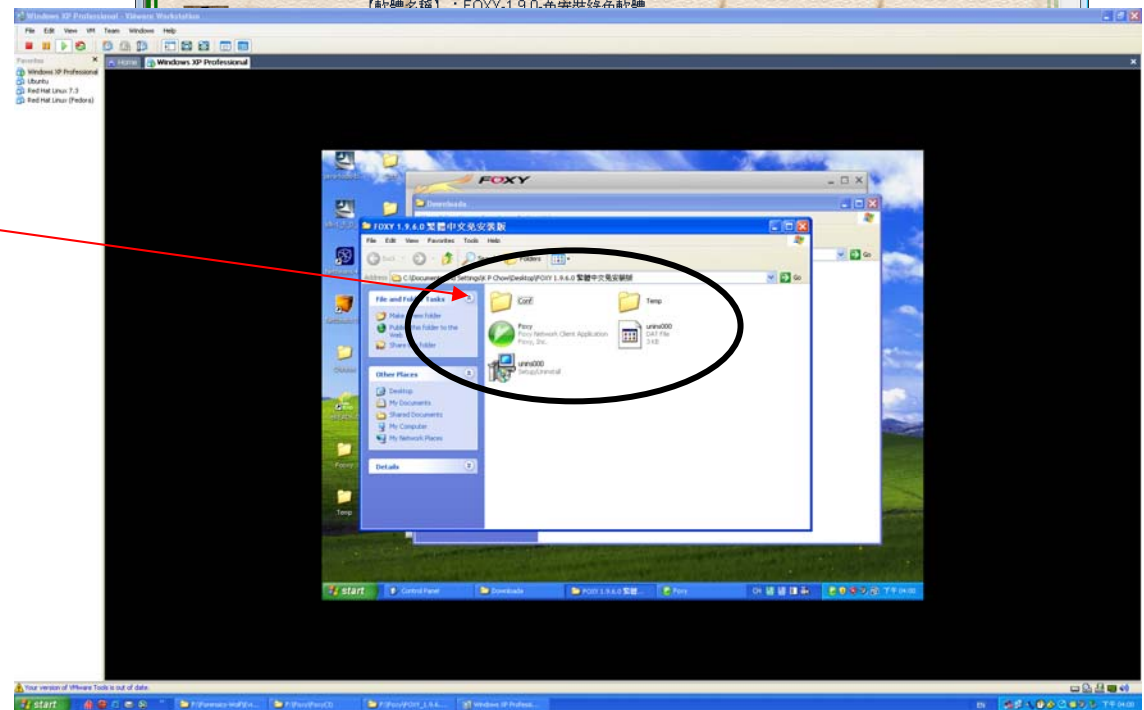
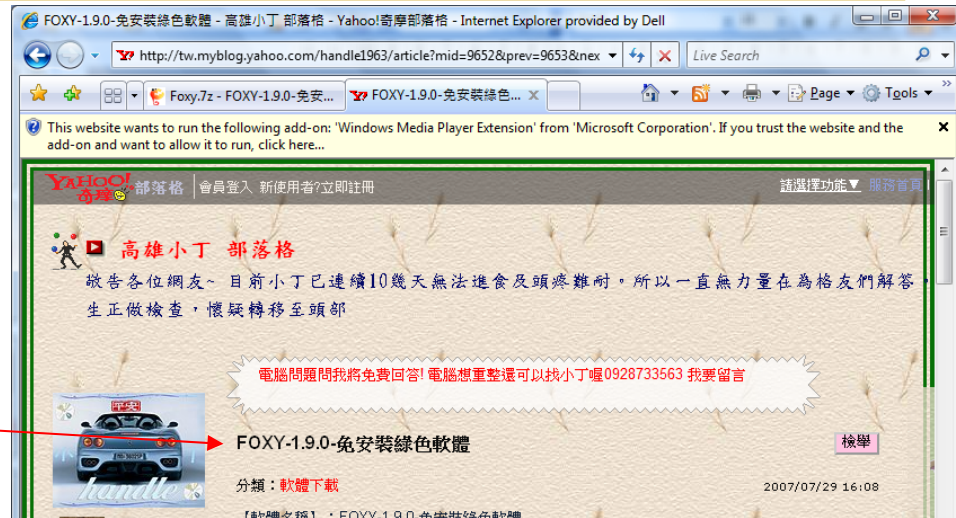
Otherwise, after remove Foxy,
some "Yxof" will appear

What is the cause of the problem?



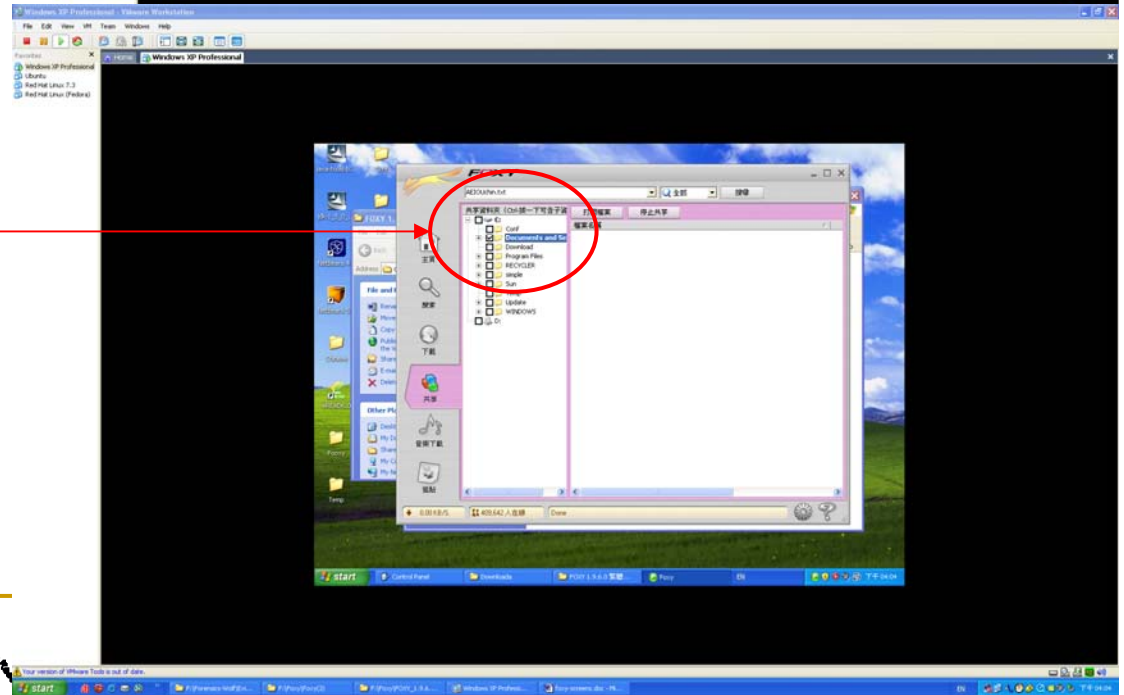
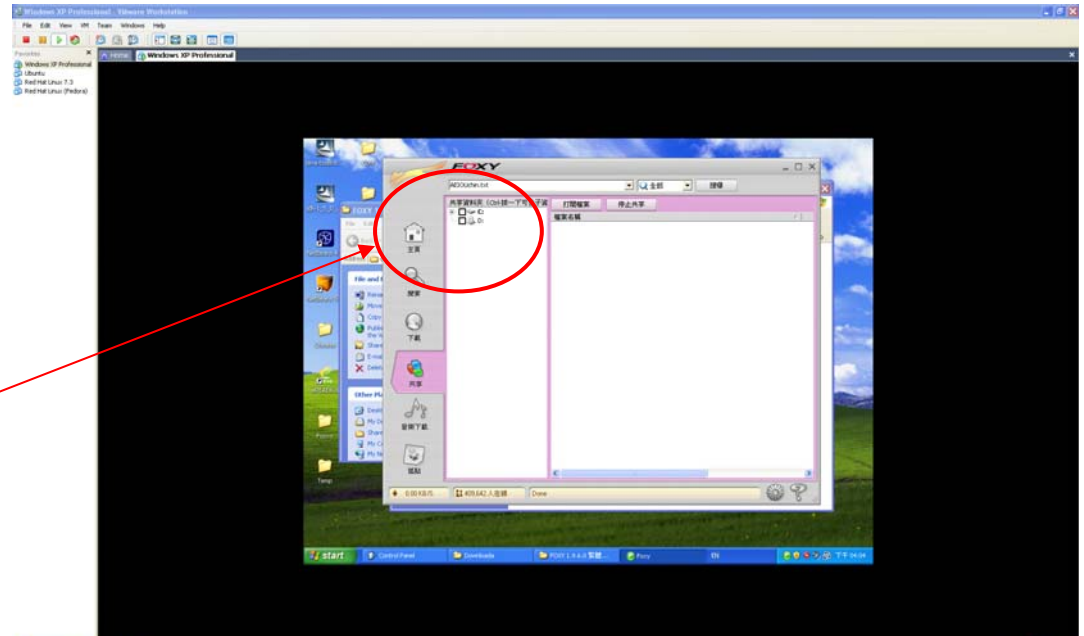
Foxy 綠色版

- Foxy 綠色版: no installation is required
- The distribution of Foxy 綠色版 may consists of default configurations in directory "Conf"
 - ❑ Settings.cfg
 - ❑ Foxy.cfg
 - ❑ Servers.cfg
 - ❑ ...
- ❑ Settings.cfg stores the last "shared folders list"
- ❑ What will happen if Settings.cfg is poisoned?



Poisoned Default Configuration

1. In another PC with Foxy running, I set the “C:\Documents and Settings” to be shared
2. I then copy the Settings.cfg into the Conf directory of the Foxy 綠色版
3. When I start the Foxy 綠色版, the C: is not shared, while the “C:\Documents and Settings” is shared
4. Anyone downloads the Foxy 綠色版 together with the configuration Conf\Settings.cfg will have “C:\Documents and Settings” is shared



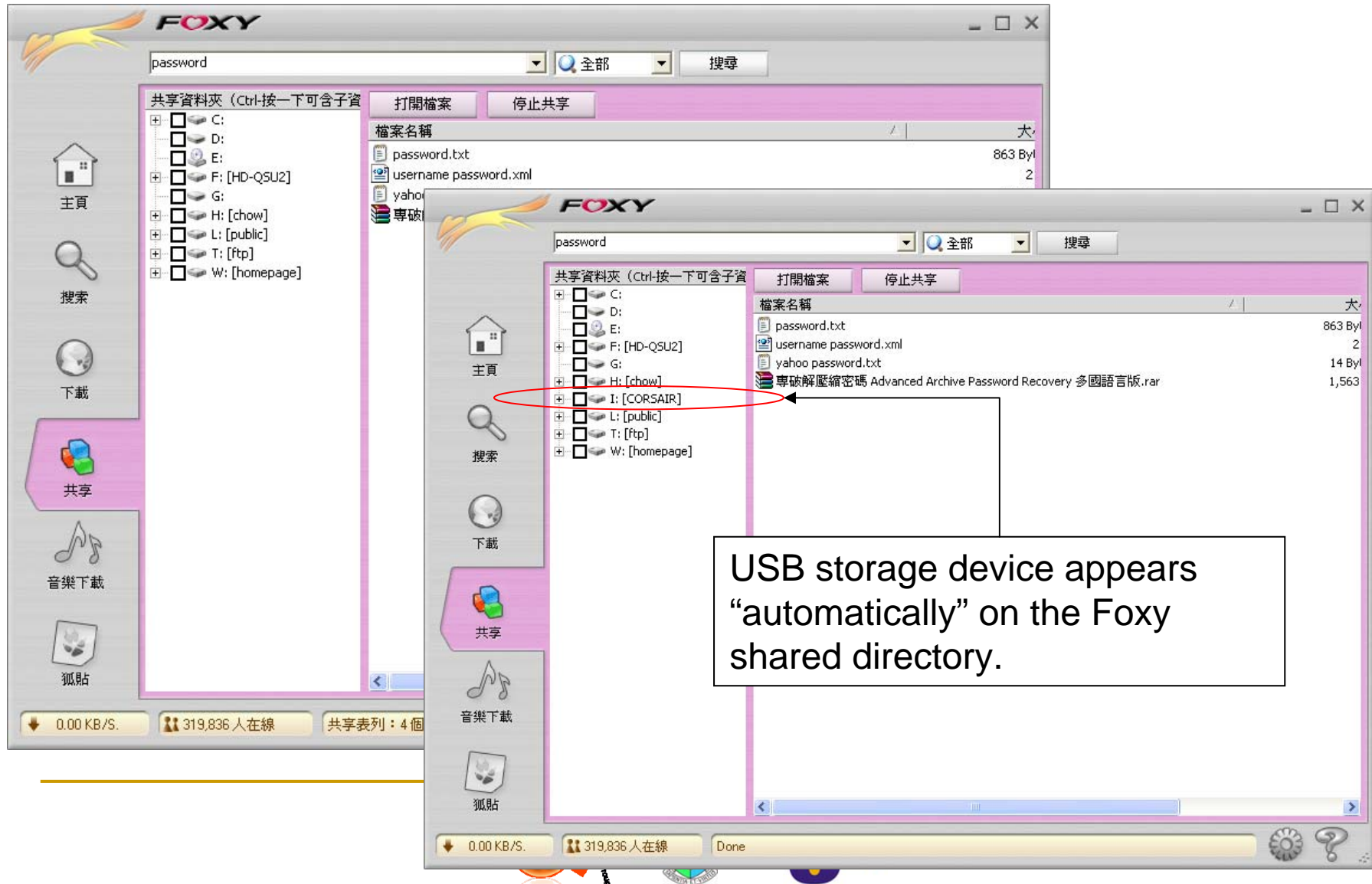
Inherited Misconfigured File Sharing Setting

- Consider the scenario that a home PC is shared by the *kid* and the *father*
 - The *kid* shares a song in his USB thumbdrive “F:” to his classmates
 - The *father* then uses the PC with the Foxy is running with he shared folder “F:”
 - The *father* inserts his USB thumbdrive which contains confidential documents, also labeled “F:”
 - All documents in “F:” are now shared
 - Foxy 天王 is able to find *father's* confidential documents



From Hongkong Economic Times
(13 May 2008)

Files can be shared when plug in a USB storage device



What is the root of the problem?

- Microsoft Windows?
- Foxy?

- 2 fundamental principles of computer security are violated:
 - Principle of least privilege
 - Principle of compartmentalization



Any simple fixes?

- Microsoft Windows XP and Vista
 - Separate user accounts for different users
 - No user account should have administrator right (except user *administrator*)
 - User “son” running Foxy is unable to share documents in user “father”
 - Foxy is now running with user “son” privilege
 - Documents in user “father” and user “son” are in different compartments
 - Other P2P file sharing tools with similar features are unable to share confidential files accidentally

Some advices

- Your home PC:
 - ❑ Separate user accounts for different users
 - ❑ Download Foxy from the official web site www.gofoxy.net
 - ❑ When using Foxy, limit the shared folder to the default, and check the default setting
- USB storage device:
 - ❑ Do not plug-in your USB storage device to any *untrusted* PC
 - ❑ If it is absolutely necessary, before plug-in the USB storage device, make sure no Foxy or other malicious software is running
- The best protection: encrypt the confidential information and decrypt it only when necessary

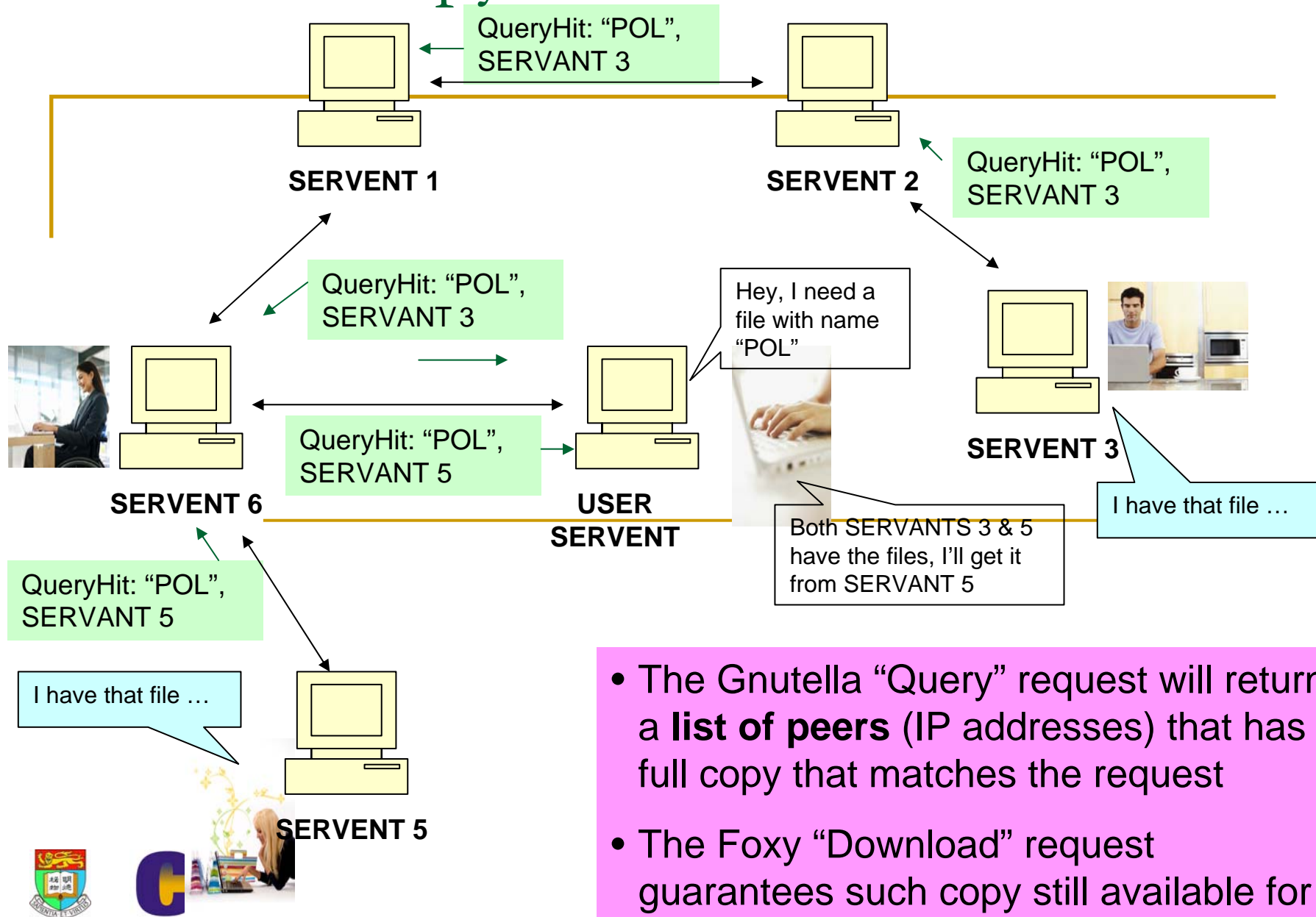


Tracing on the Foxy network

- ❑ Is it possible to trace who shares a copy of a document?
- ❑ Is it possible to trace the seeder of a document
- ❑ Once a document is available on Foxy, can it be removed?



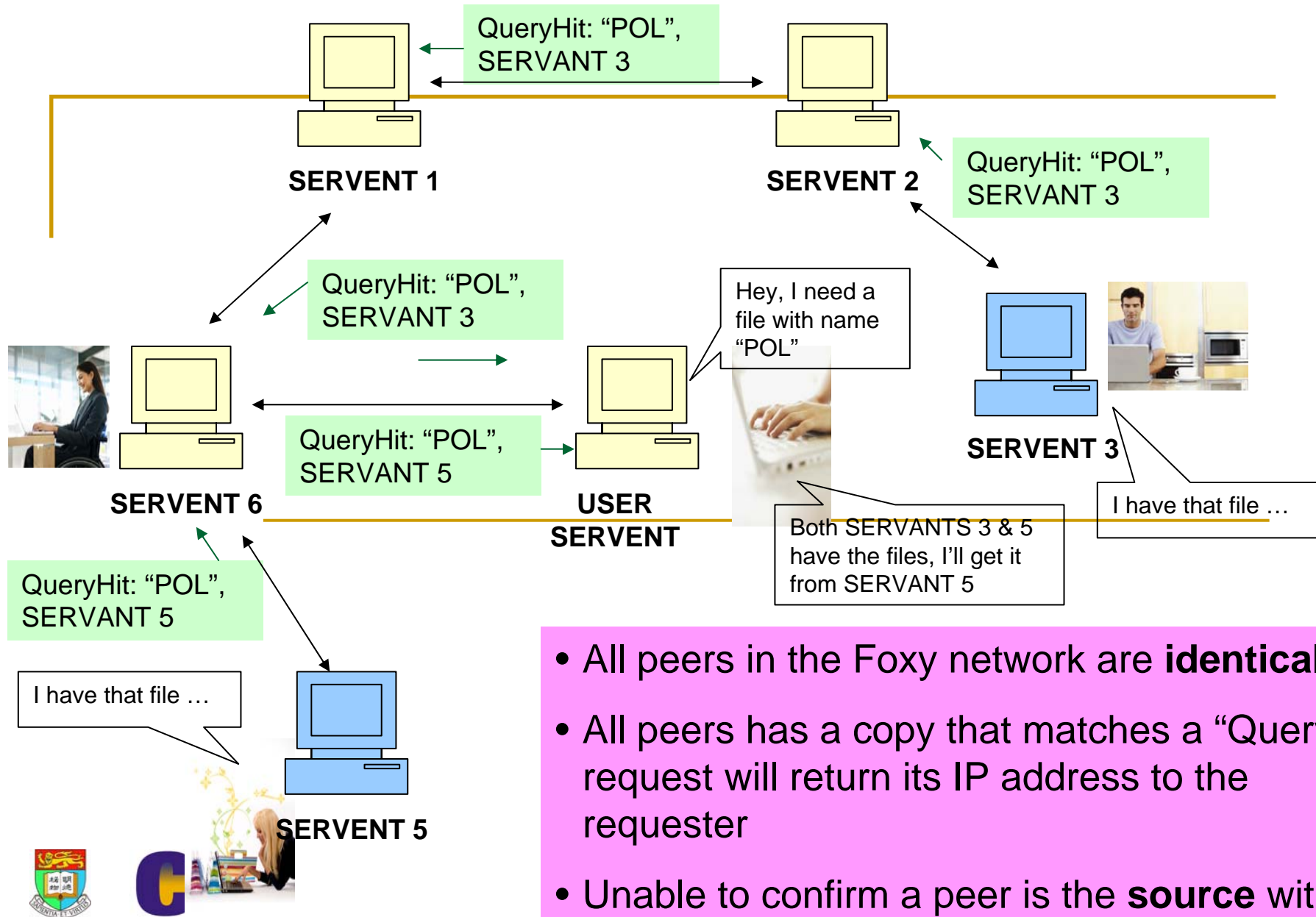
Who has a copy?



- The Gnutella "Query" request will return a **list of peers** (IP addresses) that has a full copy that matches the request
- The Foxy "Download" request guarantees such copy still available for download



Who is the source?



- All peers in the Foxy network are **identical**
- All peers has a copy that matches a "Query" request will return its IP address to the requester
- Unable to confirm a peer is the **source** with information in the Foxy network

Can a document be removed from the Foxy network by the seeder?

- In Google, function available to remove a document from Google's database and cache (in the IPCC case)
- Does similar function available in Foxy? **NO**
 - ❑ Once a document starts sharing and propagating in the Foxy network, it is impossible to recall the document nor stop the propagation
 - ❑ How about share a different document with identical name?
 - Both the new and the old files exist in the Foxy network



Conclusion

- Foxy

- ❑ The good: very easy to use P2P software
- ❑ The bad: able to share any files without leaving a “trace”
- ❑ The ugly: accidentally share folders to all peers

- My opinion

- ❑ Good technology should be promoted
- ❑ More user education



Reference

- K.P. Chow, R. Leong, M. Kwan, P. Lai, F. Law, H. Tse, K. Tse, Security Analysis of the Foxy Peer-to-Peer File Sharing Tool
- <http://i.cs.hku.hk/~cisc/forensics/papers/Foxy.pdf>



Q & A

