Issued 2/20/18

Telugu 'Text Bomb' Will Crash Your iPhone in Seconds—Here's How to Fix It

A 'text bomb' that caused havoc last week by making Apple devices crash with the use of a single letter from the Indian language Telugu has received an emergency patch. The U.S technology giant pushed out fixes for the glitch on February 19, and they are now available for each of its operating systems: macOS, iOS, watchOS, and tvOS. On its website, updates are titled iOS 11.2.6, watchOS 4.2.3, tvOS 11.2.6, and High Sierra 10.13.3 Supplemental Update. Last week, the bug surfaced online after being uncovered by Italian blog Mobile World. Upon testing, experts found it could crash iPhones and cause mobile apps to continuously loop. If received, the Telugu character would disrupt chat and email applications in seconds. Widely used software including Uber, WhatsApp, Gmail and Facebook Messenger were all impacted. Luckily, users can quickly put an end to the nasty text bomb via Apple's Security Support page by following the step-by-step download instructions. "The macOS High Sierra 10.13.3 Supplemental Update Fixes an issue where using certain character sequences could cause apps to crash," Apple states in one notice. When the news broke, online pranksters and trolls started to spread the Telugu letter in text messages and across social media in an attempt to crash devices. As noted by technology website Motherboard, one security researcher released a video showing how inserting the character into the name of a WiFi network could crash a vital application. After publishing the code to GitHub, a popular online platform used by programmers and ethical hackers to test computer

software, he later added: "Do not use it for bad stuff." Experts found it could crash iPhones and cause apps to continuously loop. Earlier in January, French developer Vincent Desmurs found iPhones and iPads could be disrupted using text messages containing a white flag emoji followed by a zero and a rainbow emoji.