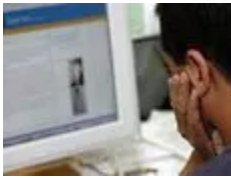


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Malware infections spike on Memorial Day in DC

By: Aaron Boyd (/author/aaron-boyd) 📅 May 22, 2015



Malware infections tend to spike at times when users are more likely to be home, such as corporate holidays. In D.C., however, those numbers skyrocket when government employees are on vacation, particularly on federal holidays.

Researchers at EnigmaSoftware.com (<http://www.enigmasoftware.com/>) found malware infections increased by 29.8 percent nationwide on federal holidays, while the D.C.-area saw an average increase of 51.7 percent. On Memorial Day, that average jumped to 63 percent.

More: Malware getting more advanced, easier to use in 2015

(<http://www.federaltimes.com/story/government/cybersecurity/2015/01/19/malware-attacks-advanced-2015/21108035/>)

"A 51 percent jump is pretty dramatic," said Patrick Morganelli, EnigmaSoftware senior vice president of technology. "That means there are a lot more people than normal who are home on their personal computers and are engaged in activities where infections are likely to occur."

EnigmaSoftware based their findings off of malware instances detected by their scanning systems on thousands of personal computers in the Washington area and on hundreds of thousands nationwide. (The company declined to release exact figures on the number of customers using their software.)

"We took a look at the number of infections detected by our software in Washington, D.C. on each of the major federal holidays over the last two years and compared the number on that day to the average number of daily infections for the prior month," EnigmaSoftware spokesman Ryan Gerding explained. "What we found is that in Washington, D.C. on federal holidays, the number of infections spike 51.7 percent compared to the typical number of daily infections."

More: 8 key data breaches of 2014 (<http://www.federaltimes.com/picture-gallery/government/cybersecurity/2015/02/04/8-key-data-breaches-of-2014/22857203/>)

Gerding noted the company currently does not sell its malware detection software to the federal government, meaning the statistics are for personal computers in the D.C.-area. However, the large concentration of federal employees in Washington and correlation with federal holidays is significant.

EnigmaSoftware also looked at other cities with large numbers of federal employees and found similar spikes. In Colorado Springs, the spike was significantly higher: 68 percent increase on average during federal holidays.

"Across the United States we saw an increase in infections on those holidays," Gerding said. "We expect there to be an increase any time people are going to be home. What was interesting was that when we focused on a couple of cities where there's a higher than average number of federal employees, the spike was significantly higher."

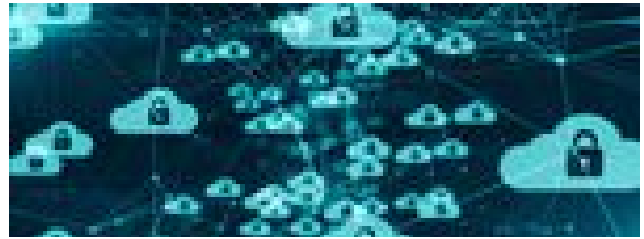
In Washington, Veterans Day saw the biggest spike in infections, with a 92 percent increase in malicious activity. Memorial Day ranked second at 63 percent.

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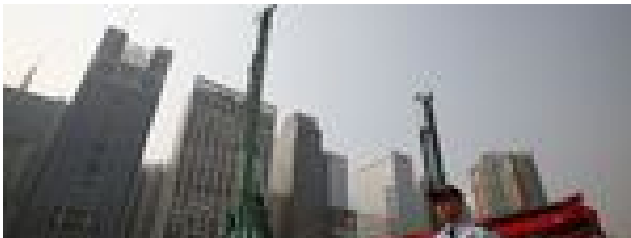
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