

# Why is Ransomware the perfect hack?

It is difficult to get an accurate number of cyber attacks, but the available data on ransomware give a poor picture.

A June 2016 study by research and security firm Malwarebytes found that 47% of US businesses, hospitals, schools, and government agencies had been infected with ransomware at least once. While the UK survey found that 12% of participants had a ransomware attack, and globally 37%.



## The most effective tool for hacking

Andrew Howard, chief technology officer at Kudelski Security, says ransomware is used by attackers as one of the most effective hacking tools available.

The US Department of Homeland Security estimates an average of 4,000 people per day in 2016 were hacked, up 300% from 2015.

Joe Opacki, vice president of threat research at PhishLabs, said ransomware has transformed the way hacking to make money. 'Instead of having to steal data and sell it or rent out a botnet to other criminals, ransomware offers a direct form of payment,' Opacki said.

This is not a new concept, the first versions of the plan date back to 1989. The malware pioneer was quickly defeated. But decades have passed and new modes of distribution and encryption have emerged.

## Is a strong enemy

Nolen Scaife, a graduate student in information systems at the University of Florida (UF), says ransomware is a 'not easy to chew' adversary.

'Fighting this type of attack is extremely difficult and we are only just starting to see the right measures to prevent ransomware,' said Mr. Scaife.

'Slightly different' ransomware attacks make them difficult to detect and disable. To complicate matters further, the ransomware activity in the system may be the same as the legitimate actions, making detection even more difficult.

## All attacks have clear goals

CBC News quoted security expert Jérôme Segura as saying that the hospital was the most vulnerable to attack. 'The hospital system is outdated, has a lot of confidential information and a lot of patient information' - Segura expert explained.

The next place to be vulnerable to attack is the police station. In 2015, at least 1 in 5 police departments of the state of Maine, USA, was attacked using DOS operating system. Officers paid tens of thousands of dollars to regain access to the system.

Not only businesses, schools, government agencies, but home computers are also heavily affected by ransomware. Of the more than 2.3 million users of Kaspersky Labs security products that were hacked between April 2015 and February 2016, 87% were home computer users.

## Unpredictable

In the past, people were often deceived by sketchy scams. However, in recent years, the scams are more sophisticated and much worse. Today's ransomware attacks are more complex and difficult to detect.

There is no specific information about the ransom, but the ransomware proceeds are estimated at \$ 209 million in the first three months of 2016.

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