

Monetisation a driving force behind development of malware

The PandaLabs Report for 2015 indicates that it detected and neutralised more than 84 million new malware samples during 2015 - nine million more than the previous year. The figure indicates that there were 230,000 new malware samples produced daily over the course of the year.



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Last year saw the greatest number of cyber attacks recorded around the world, with a total of 304 million samples, meaning that more than a quarter of all malware samples ever recorded were produced in 2015 (27.63%). It was also a difficult year for multinational companies many of whom suffered large scale data theft and interference on their IT systems.

Growth expected

"Growth of malware will continue in 2016 as monetisation remains a driving force behind the development of malware. Sophisticated programming techniques and automation are used to increase exponentially unique variants of malware," said Jeremy Matthews, MD of Panda Security Africa.

"In 2015 we saw that Trojans, potentially unwanted programs (PUPs) and distinct families of ransomware spread fear among larger businesses worldwide through massive attacks and the theft of thousands of confidential files."

Trojans continued to be the main source of malware (51.45%) comfortably ahead of the rest of the collected samples: viruses - 22.79%, worms - 13.22%, PUPs - 10.71%, and cases of Spyware - 1.83%. In addition, Trojans caused the largest infections worldwide at 60.3%. PUPs were also particularly harmful, with nearly a third of infections resorting to trick techniques to fit into the targeted PCs, far ahead of Adware/Spyware - 5.19%, worms - 2.98%, and viruses - 2.55%.

Aside from Trojans, ransomware was the most common form of cyber attack throughout the year. "Ransomware is favoured by cyber criminals, as it is one of the easiest ways to make a profit. It has shown itself to be very effective, especially as experience indicates that businesses are quick to pay cyber criminals to recover their stolen information," according to Matthews.

China most infected

Last year was notable for being the year with the highest rate of infections caused on computers. On a geographic level, China was the country with the most infected computers (57.24%), a figure that was nearly 30% more than in 2014. Taiwan

was next, with an infection rate of 49.15%, followed by Turkey (42.52%). These three countries remain at the top of the infection rate rankings, as was the case in 2014 and 2013.

Other countries that registered an infection rate that was above the global average included Colombia (33.17%), Uruguay (32.98%), and Spain (32.15%).

According to the information gathered nine of the countries with the lowest rates of infection were in Europe. The Nordic countries occupied the top positions: Finland was ahead of the rest, with a rate of 20.32%, followed by Norway (20.51%) and Sweden (20.88%).

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