Spam attacks targeting mobile users rising

In the first quarter of 2014 spammers began imitating messages from mobile applications, in particular WhatsApp, Viber and Google Hangouts.

Image: www.freedigitalphotos.net

Notifications purportedly sent from these applications were used to spread both malware and harmless adverts. The rising popularity of mobile devices means that phishing attacks targeting Apple IDs are becoming more frequent.

Many gadget owners are used to both the synchronisation of their contacts and the fact that messages from mobile applications can arrive via email on their devices, and so few would be suspicious of the fact that WhatsApp is not directly linked to an email service. This lack of caution could prove costly, as the attached archive contained the notorious Backdoor.Win32.Androm.bjkd, the main function of which is to steal personal data from users.

"Recently we have seen a growth in the number of attacks targeting mobile users. Gadgets have become popular even among those who had little interaction with computers and are less familiar with computer security. This opens up new vectors of attacks for spammers and phishers. To protect themselves, users should remember not to open emails from unknown senders and especially not to click any links in these emails, which inevitably pose a risk to user security. Clicking unsafe links threatens user security regardless of which device is used - they pose a danger to desktop computers and mobile gadgets alike," said Darya Gudkova, head of content analysis & research department of Kaspersky Lab.

The list of countries most frequently targeted by malicious emails has undergone some changes since the third quarter of last year. The US's share (14%) grew 3.68 pp while the contribution of the UK (9.9%) and Germany (9.6%) decreased by 2.27 and 1.34 pp respectively. As a result, the US, which was third in the previous quarter, returned to the top of the rating in Q1 2014.

Top-three spamming countries

The top three spam sources remained unchanged from the previous quarter: China (-0.34 percentage points), the US (+1.23 percentage points) and South Korea (-0.91 percentage points).

The email and search portals category topped the rating of the phishers' most popular targets (36.6% of all attacks). Second came social networking sites with 26% followed by financial and e-pay organisations and banks (14.7%).

The main goal of most malicious programmes distributed via email is to steal confidential data. However, in Q1 malware capable of spreading spam and launching DDoS attacks was also popular. The most popular malicious programmes are now multifunctional: they can steal data from the victim computer, make the computer part of a botnet, or download and install other malicious programmes without the user's knowledge.

The percentage of spam in total email traffic during the first quarter of the year came to 66.34%, down 6.42 pp from the previous quarter. However, compared with the same period of Q1 2013, the share of spam in Q1 2014 barely changed, falling by only 0.16 pp.

The full report is available at securelist.com.

Also see Cyberthreat real-time map.

For more, visit: https://www.bizcommunity.com