

## RESEARCH STUDIES

Below are links to published studies / academic papers on the use of malware and other potentially dangerous programs that proliferate on infringing sites, with a brief summary of the scope of the research paper.

The studies prove that, in addition to professionals in the creative industries, end users are also victims of the massive and growing cybercrime industry.



### THE 'BOGUS FEATURES' LURKING BEHIND PIRATE FILM AND TV SITES

Commissioned/Published by: The Industry Trust

Released: April 2014

Highlights two studies: The first by Incopro found that 97% of the thirty most frequently used infringing film/ TV sites in the UK contained malware or credit card scams and 3 in 4 visitors to the sites experienced problems with their device after visiting the sites. The second study was a survey by ICM of 4,210 users in the UK aged 16+ which found that the top offenders encountered after accessing motion picture and TV series content from infringing sites were:

- **Pop-up ads:** Nearly 2 in 5 (39%) experienced pop-up adverts which are difficult to get rid of and can be used to generate revenue from click-throughs as part of an online scam
- **Viruses:** 1 in 3 (32%) downloaded a virus on to their device, often leading to their devices being unusable or having to be fixed
- **Malware:** More than a quarter (28%) downloaded malware on their device
- **Stolen data:** Almost 1 in 5 (17%) lost personal data or had personal information stolen
- **Illicit material:** 14% were exposed to material such as pornography or violent images

<http://www.industrytrust.co.uk/>

### ILLEGAL STREAMING AND CYBER SECURITY RISKS: A DANGEROUS STATUS QUO?

Commissioned/Published by The Association of Internet Security Professionals

September 2014

Academic paper arguing that infringing video streaming has become the number one method to propagate malware on the Internet. The paper recommends mounting an awareness campaign targeted at computer users everywhere and informing individuals of the personal risks of illegal streaming. The cyber security dangers that accessing unauthorized videos pose to individual computers mean that illegal streaming can be as damaging to the user as it is to the copyright holders of our most cherished sports, television and film content.

<http://cryptome.org/2014/09/illegal-streaming-malware-epoch-times-full-14-0923.pdf>

### MALWARE RISKS

Commissioned/Published by The Asia Digital Alliance

June 2016

A study explaining A RAT – Remote Access Trojan [a very appropriate acronym] - a malicious code that can be embedded and disguised within a trusted file attachment such as a PDF, Word or Excel document, or hidden within a movie or music torrent or file. Once a victim clicks on the attachment, or opens or streams the content file, the RAT malware will be downloaded.



RATs can and are used to steal passwords, credit card details and other personal data and to remotely activate a victim's webcam and audio functionality, browse through a victim's private pictures or videos, and download and publicly share (or sell) the images and videos of their choosing.

<http://www.asiadigitalalliance.com/malware-risks/>

### **DIGITAL BAIT: HOW CONTENT THEFT SITES AND MALWARE ARE EXPLOITED BY CYBERCRIMINALS TO HACK INTO INTERNET USERS' COMPUTERS AND PERSONAL DATA**

Commissioned/Published by The Digital Citizens Alliance & RiskIQ  
December 2015

After comparing a sample of approximately 800 infringing sites to a control group of 250 similarly situated non-infringing sites, this study found that:

- 1 out of every 3 infringing site surveyed contained malware
- Visitors were 28 times more likely to get malware from an infringing site than on a similarly situated non-infringing site
- 45% of the malware on the infringing sites surveyed were delivered passively (i.e., a process which infects a user's device without the user having to click a link after arriving on the page)

<http://www.digitalcitizensalliance.org/>

### **THE REVENUE SOURCES FOR WEBSITES MAKING AVAILABLE COPYRIGHT CONTENT WITHOUT CONSENT IN THE EUROPEAN UNION**

Commissioned/Published by Incopro  
March 2015

This study found that approximately one third (31.5%) of the advertisements reviewed from 622 popular infringing sites across France, Germany, Italy, Spain, and the UK were identified as trick buttons or malware, where clicking the advertisement could potentially infect the user's computer with malware and bots.

<http://www.incoproip.com/>

### **TROUBLE IN OUR DIGITAL MIDST: HOW DIGITAL PLATFORMS ARE BEING OVERRUN BY BAD ACTORS AND HOW THE INTERNET COMMUNITY CAN BEAT THEM AT THEIR OWN GAME**

Commissioned/Published by The Digital Citizens Alliance  
June 2017

Digital and social platforms are an integral part of our society but, as users adopt these platforms and technologies, so too have bad actors looking to scam and defraud unsuspected consumers, sell illicit and illegal goods, and spread false information and malware.

Cybercrime has shaken American's trust in the Internet. DCA polling shows that illegal and illicit activities online threaten consumers' faith in some of the largest and most profitable companies:

- 64% of consumers have lost trust in digital platforms over the past year
- 60% say digital platforms should be responsible for what people do on them
- 3 in 4 say digital platforms need to do more to keep the internet safe

This report puts a spotlight on emerging issues, look at potential solutions and hopefully spur a thoughtful discussion about the future of digital platforms.

<http://www.digitalcitizensalliance.org/>

## **GOOD MONEY GONE BAD: DIGITAL THIEVES AND THE HIJACKING OF THE ONLINE AD BUSINESS**

Commissioned/Published by The Digital Citizens Alliance

February 2014

This study and survey shows that of 45 large infringing sites (greater than 5 million monthly unique visitors), over half contained (60%) contained malware download links. It reports that the public expects digital and social platforms to do more on illicit and/or illegal activities posing threats to safety – including scams, pirated content, drugs and stolen goods. It urges platforms to take more responsibility for what occurs on their sites or risk further eroding consumer trust in the Internet and its most popular companies.

<http://media.digitalcitizensactionalliance.org/>