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# Online crime's impact spreads

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By **Jon Swartz, USA TODAY**

SAN FRANCISCO — There appears to be no end to the cybercrime wave despite daily headlines about the latest computer breach and the best efforts of hundreds of security companies.

The latest estimate: \$200 billion a year, rivaling the illicit markets for drug trafficking

and money laundering, according to several security experts and law-enforcement officials.

Mikko Hypponen, chief research officer at computer-security firm F-Secure, was among scores of computer-security experts here this week to discuss how data theft and Internet-enabled financial fraud have evolved into a global enterprise as sophisticated and responsive to economic principles as any other industry.

"International crime 10 years ago was drugs and money laundering," says Hypponen. Yet, Interpol, the international crime-fighting organization, has only a 65 million euro annual budget (about \$102 million) to fight crime, he says.

The onslaught of cybercrime has had wide-ranging impact, based on the topics of panels, reports and surveys released during the conference.

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•**In online we don't trust.** The hazards of surfing and shopping online have shaken consumer confidence in e-commerce.

Nearly 60% of Americans are fearful someone will steal their account passwords when they bank online, and 38% do not trust making payments online, according to a survey of 1,000 U.S. adults conducted by TNS Sofres on behalf of digital-security company Gemalto.

•**Banking threats.** Consumers are warranted in their fears. Bank accounts were the most commonly advertised item for sale on underground computer servers, accounting for 22% of all items in the last six months of 2007, according to a Symantec report this week.

Several analysts, including John Pescatore of Gartner, point to the escalating threat of bots, sprawling networks of compromised PCs controlled by criminal groups. Bot nets are increasingly spreading at financial institutions. The top bot nets send a staggering 100 billion spam e-mail messages each day, SecureWorks says.

•**Malware ads.** Speaking of spam and other forms of malicious software code, hackers are using YouTube videos to advertise their goods.

In one post, a group from Albania offers to illegally break into corporate networks to steal data and implant malware, says Don Jackson, director of threat intelligence at SecureWorks.

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Pharma John wrote: 4h 16m ago

Sorry, but bank networks are based on a fiber optic backbone, as is the Defense department. Therefore, Hackers from the OUTSIDE can not break into a bank computer system without help from the inside.

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Bigrcube wrote: 4h 33m ago

operations wrote: 1h 44m ago

thomasf:

"Whom" is used when it is the receiver of action. When active, use "who".

For example, "People who use windows...." is correct, but not "People whom use windows.."

"To whom should I send a copy of Linux...." is correct, as it is a receiver of the action.

+++++

powerslyder wrote: 5m ago

It's all possible because Windblows and microsoft suck.

+++++

So, to WHOM should I pose this question: "Is LinSUX a better platform to thwart these cyber-thieves as compared to Windblows and Micro-SUX?!" "Who is better, LinSUX or Windblows?!"

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Tarna wrote: 4h 34m ago

Powerslyder, I find your comments lacking because you are quick to criticize microsoft but if you are so unhappy with it there are other options such as LINUX and APPLE. It never ceases to amaze me how people can be so lazy and go around complaining about how bad particular software or services are but none of them are willing to learn to use or go to some other service. IT is called CHOICE and it seems most people have forgotten how to use it. As far as this article is concerned it is a matter of using safety precautions and be aware of the dangers so that you can avoid the pitfalls. Yes, there are somethings you cannot avoid but you can lobby your local congress to have some laws changed for the better. Again, it takes action and dedication to change things. Remember, if it is too easy or free, where is the qimmick?

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powerslyder wrote: 4h 43m ago

It's all possible because Windblows and microsoft suck.

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cr wrote: 4h 46m ago

"Whom" is frequently cited as being archiac (e.g. "thou" is an archiac pronoun) in modern dictionaries.

"Who" is now considered to be correct as both the subject and the object of a sentence.

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zappo707 wrote: 5h 1m ago

I give selfish human beings 50 more years before they destroy themsleves. Hopefully i'll be gone by then...

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operations wrote: 6h 22m ago

thomasf:

"Whom" is used when it is the receiver of action. When active, use "who".

For example, "People who use windows...." is correct, but not "People whom use windows.."

"To whom should I send a copy of Linux...." is correct, as it is a receiver of the action.

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truckman wrote: 6h 36m ago

The people caught aren't really punished. not a whole lot of incentive to stop when caught either. I would like to see spammers, virus writers and hackers have their hands and fingers smashed with a ball peen hammer and then let them go. If they are operating in foreign countries block those countries from accessing the internet until they are caught and severely punished.

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TOM NC wrote: 6h 50m ago

Hey, it's not my fault if so many are not educated enough to ditch Windows and move to some variant of Linux. My personal favorite is Ubuntu, in addition to being free, it is inherently so much safer than Windows. I've been using it for three years now, regularly updated of course. I guess it's like that old saying, "you can lead a horse to water, but you can't make him drink..

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