

A SURGE AND A SHIFT - BUSINESSES BEWARE!



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We've all heard the term "malware" but what exactly is it and what does it mean for your business? According to Wikipedia, it is "*Software that is intended to damage or disable computers and computer systems.*" Malware is not picky, attacking companies large and small with the only commonality being that the "target" is any PC that is not properly protected. Panda Security noted that there were 73,000 fresh daily threats unleashed during the first quarter of 2011 -- a 26% rise compared to the same period in 2010.

Along with this surge in malware comes a shift in cyber-attacks from large to small firms. A recent article from the Wall Street Journal stated that cyber criminals have taken notice that smaller businesses with limited budgets usually have weak security. The percentage of attacks against smaller companies rose from 27% in 2009 to 63% in 2010. Let's take a closer look to understand the risks to your business.

An extended definition from Wikipedia is that malware, or malicious software, consists of programming (code, scripts, active content, and other software) designed to disrupt or deny operation, gather information that leads to loss of privacy or exploitation, gain unauthorized access to system resources, and other abusive behavior. It is a general term used by computer professionals to mean various forms of hostile, intrusive, or **annoying** software or program code. Malware could include any of the following: computer viruses, worms, Trojan horses, spyware, dishonest adware, scare ware, crime ware, most rootkits (privileged "hidden" access to your computer), and other malicious and **unwanted** software or program.

Note two of the key words in this description of malware: annoying and unwanted. Don't think of malware as an intrusive program designed specifically to hack your network and steal your company information. Malware can simply be some annoying adware installed on your computer that can gather personal information, consume your internet bandwidth, or hog your computer memory. It can monitor your web activity and report it to third party companies. It can even install itself in your computer to make your computer a "host" and in turn, use your PC to spread SPAM. The one common thing any type of malware can do is slow down your computer and even your entire network, leading to less productivity and great frustration!

Couple the surge of malware with the increasing risk of cyber-attacks and your business can quickly become a target for trouble. How can you ensure your business is protected? As a Managed Service Provider for hundreds of PCs, SSE understands that there is no "magic bullet" or single solution to wipe out the threat but a multi-layered approach using specific products to complement each other can make a dramatic difference. Contact SSE Network Services for a health check of your computer systems to see if any unwanted malware has made itself "at home" or to identify any vulnerabilities leaving the door open for cyber criminals. We can customize a solution to protect your business with multi-layers of defense. Call 314-439-4700 or email info@sseinc.com for more information.