

Time for Mac Users to Think About Viruses

Until recently, Mac computer users have long enjoyed relative freedom from hacker attacks; however, researchers at Symantec Corporation say online criminals are now setting their sights on Mac users.

In fact, in during the last couple of weeks, 4 of our customers have brought Macs into the shop with viruses.

Visitors to certain web sites are led to believe they are downloading virus protection or a free video player when in fact they are installing malicious code onto their Macs.

Once the users authorize the transaction, the hackers can redirect the users future browsing to fraudulent web sites and possibly steal the user's information or passwords. Sometimes they simply send ads for pornographic web sites. This results in thousands of dollars in income for the criminals.

While you may think that Macs are essentially more secure than PCs because they are built better, security experts would argue differently. They believe that the Mac is actually no more secure than a PC. In fact, they note that the relatively low number of viruses, exploits and other cyber-attacks directed at Mac users is due to Apple's relatively small share of the computer market.

"I don't think that the Mac OS is more secure than Windows -- I think it is safer than Windows because there are less people trying to attack it. There is a big difference," Natalie Lambert, a senior analyst at Forrester Research recently shared with MacNewsWorld.

With that said, the fact remains that for every single attack on a Mac, there are at least 100 attacks on Windows-based systems.

So what should you do if you own a Mac? Use the same safe online surfing practices as PC users, keep your anti-virus software up-to-date, never open strange e-mails from unknown sources, and only verify user names and passwords by phone with your bank or other financial institutions.

And like we tell all of our customers, if you get a strange pop-up or message stating that a "Virus has been detected...", or asking you to download something, or to something unexpected, do not click on anything, do not even move your mouse, just immediately shut down or "crash" your computer by holding down the on/off switch. That is the only way to prevent the virus from downloading to your computer.