Losing Control of Your Android Smartphone to Hackers

August 27, 2014 - A few years ago, hackers in Eastern Europe came up with malware - malicious software - that was designed to self-install on computers and make them unusable. Computer users would see a screen that told them they would have to pay a ransom in order to have the use of their computer returned to them. The scam was so successful that it has now gone mobile and users of phones with the Android operating system are being targeted.

Tweet

```
(function() {
var s = document.createElement('SCRIPT'), s1 = document.getElementsByTagName('SCRIPT')[0];
s.type = 'text/javascript';
s.src = 'http://widgets.digg.com/buttons.js';
s1.parentNode.insertBefore(s, s1);
})();
```

```
(function() {
  var po = document.createElement('script'); po.type = 'text/javascript'; po.async = true;
  po.src = 'https://apis.google.com/js/plusone.js';
  var s = document.getElementsByTagName('script')[0]; s.parentNode.insertBefore(po, s);
})();
```

Renamed "ransomware", there have been hundreds of thousands of phone infected in the last year. Once again, the software is coming out of Eastern Europe and is being installed on phones when users either download a bad application or when they visit an infected website.

Once a phone is infected, the user will likely see a screen, supposedly from the FBI or other law enforcement agency, telling them that have violated some law and that they need to pay a fine in order to have their phone unlocked. But in some cases, installed ransomware will do more than just lock the user out of his or her phone. It may also look for any banking or financial applications stored on your device and search for any stored passwords. In other words, ransomware might result in you having your bank account cleaned out.

Users can and should protect themselves by installing antivirus software on their phones, just as they do on their computers. There are several antivirus software packages designed for Android. Lookout is probably the largest and best known company in the market.

Given the popularity of smartphones, it is no surprise that hackers are now targeting users. Consumers need to be aware of this and to start taking the same precautions that they do to keep hackers out of their personal computer. Not doing so could prove to be more than just a big inconvenience. It could lead to fraud and identity theft.

byJim Malmberg

Note: When posting a comment, please sign-in first if you want a response. If you are not registered, click here. Registration is easy and free.

Follow me on Twitter:

Follow ACCESS