

Buying A Cheap Keyboard Could Cost You Your Identity

November 29, 2017 - It's happened to just about everyone who uses a computer from time to time. Your keyboard starts acting up or the letters on the keys have worn off. So you decide to replace it. In most cases, you're probably looking for a replacement that simply works. No need to spend a lot of money. Just find something cheap and functional. As it turns out, that's a decision that could cost you big money and turn you into an identity theft victim.

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If you look for cheap keyboards on Amazon or other websites, one manufacturer pops up pretty regularly: MantisTek. It's a Chinese company and it has some pretty inexpensive mechanical keyboards. But there are reports popping up that the software supplied by the keyboard manufacturer is key-logging and then transmitting collected data to servers belonging to Alibaba in China. For the uninitiated, key-logging simply means that the software is recording your key strokes.

According to a report in Yahoo News, collected data is being transmitted in unencrypted form. That means that anyone who is interested can intercept it and read it. If you type out your SSN, hackers can see it. If you type a user name and password, it's visible. And if you use the same user name and password on multiple sites, that will be readily apparent to any hacker who is looking.

The good news is that the software supplied with MantisTek keyboards isn't required for the keyboard to work properly. The simplest solution to the problem is not to install it. But if you have installed the software, you need to use a firewall to block it from transmitting data. You may also want to change any passwords you've typed since you started using the keyboard.

If you are considering a new keyboard, it's probably a good idea to read the product reviews from other consumers. It's apparent that educated buyers already know about this issue. One MantisTek keyboard available on Amazon has a customer review that reads, "These MantisTek keyboards are just fantastic! If you forget any of your passwords, just email Alibaba they can let you know what is was." Enough said!

by Jim Malmberg

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