ATTACKS
This Holiday Season
Based on the Carbon Black Threat Analysis Unit’s (TAU) Holiday Threat Report

The holidays are a time for family, food, and celebration. But they’re also a time when companies need to be extra vigilant about cyber security. Organizations should expect to see a spike in potential cyber threats starting with Black Friday/Cyber Monday and continuing through the holiday shopping season.

During the holiday season, there is often a lot of noise in the online world and attackers do everything they can to take advantage of that. This applies not only to consumers who shop online, but also to businesses as well, many of which are understaffed and, in the case of retailers, approaching the busiest time of the year.

Tom Kellermann
Carbon Black’s Chief Cybersecurity Officer

Over the past few years, holiday cyberattacks have been increasing at an alarming pace.

In 2017, cybersecurity alerts spiked on Black Friday/Cyber Monday and remained high through New Year’s. The highest spike during this season occurred in the days following Christmas, when consumers are looking to take advantage of post-holiday shopping deals.

Most of these attacks were commodity malware, commonly delivered through spear phishing campaigns.

Recently, attacks targeting organizations have resulted in the theft of millions of customer records and credit card numbers as well as major breach costs for the targeted organizations.

Reasons For Increased Attacks

- Rushing to add security tools to avoid slowing down business
- Distraught employees more likely to be targeted by phishing
- Traveling employees accessing networks and more likely to lose company property

Evaluate emails basic hygiene — look for errors in grammar and spelling, as well as unfamiliar domain names
Determine the email’s content & motivation — any requests for personal or financial information should be viewed with extreme caution and double checked
Attachments & Link Landmines — attackers often use links inside of attachments to target victims

3 Ways to Spot a Spear Phishing Email

- Include a merged name [e.g., “Jen Smith”]
- Be aware of the risk of clicking on links
- Evaluate the domain name for typos or other anomalies

Do you want to stop the most common holiday attacks?

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