

Malware Awareness: What to know and how to protect yourself

Malware is software used to disrupt a computer, server, or network. It is one of the biggest threats to the security of your devices. Malware includes viruses, spyware, ransomware, and other unwanted software that gets secretly installed onto your device. Criminals can use malware to steal your sensitive information, gain unauthorized access to device files or private information, and gain access to financial accounts to steal money.

How does a device become infected with malware?

- **Phishing**-emails that trick victims into clicking on malicious links
- **Vishing**-the use of phone calls to trick victims into giving sensitive information or installing harmful programs on their computer
- **Smishing**-the use of text messages to trick victims into clicking on malicious links or downloading harmful programs
- **Quishing**-the use of QR codes to direct victims to visit malicious sites or download harmful programs on their computers

There are steps you can take to help protect yourself from malware and to respond if you have malware on your device.

1. Update Your Software

- Ensure your operation system and all software are up-to-date
- Anti-virus software and any other applications that might have vulnerabilities should be updated

2. Run Anti-Virus and Anti-Malware Software

- Use anti-virus software to run a thorough scan of your computer.
- Use a dedicated anti-malware software for an additional check to ensure all threats are found and eliminated

3. Disconnect from the Internet

- To prevent malware from spreading or sending sensitive information to a malicious actor, disconnect your computer from the internet
- Be sure to unplug ethernet cables and disable Wi-Fi

4. Change Passwords and Monitor Accounts

- After removing malware, change all passwords, especially if they have been compromised.
- Monitor bank statements and other online accounts for unusual activity

¹ StationX65+ Malware Facts for 2024

² Comparitech Malware Statistics & Facts for 2024

There is no guarantee that utilization of any of this content will result in a safe device.

Signs of Malware

- Frequent error messages
- Slow Performance
- Excessive pop-ups
- Ransom Demands
- Unusual Messages



In 2022 there were 5.5 billion malware attacks worldwide¹

Over 270K new malware variants were detected in 2022²

Top Sources of Malware

Phishing/Email Attacks

Security Pop-Ups

Removeable storage devices