

DOS Extortion Fading

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The economics of Denial Of Service blackmailing isn't working out, and botnet owners are shifting to other, less risky crimes.

Symantec is reporting a decline in the number of organized DDOS (Distributed Denial Of Service) attacks launched for profit.

Symantec attributes this to its claim that such attacks are no longer profitable, an interesting and encouraging claim. It's difficult to know with any real certainty how much of this sort of blackmail goes on. Most companies would want to keep it quiet.

Very large companies can defend themselves somewhat against DDOS attacks through distribution networks like Akamai. Smaller ones can either put themselves in the hands of the authorities or pay up.

But engaging in these attacks is risky - not so much because the attacker could get caught, but because they could lose part or all of their botnet. DDOS attacks aren't like spamming; there are people who hunt for botnets that spam and try to take them down, but it's not like the cops are losing any sleep over it or the ISPs are working overtime to take down the bots on their own networks. A DDOS attack, however, would garner much more unwanted attention.

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