

2007 looks like year of 'malware'

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The problem of malicious software or malware appears to be getting exponentially worse. So far this year, IBM Internet Security Systems (ISS) X-Force research and development team has identified more than 210,000 new malware samples. That's more than the team found during all of 2006.

According to the team's report, Trojans (seemingly legitimate files that are actually malware) comprise the largest category so far in 2007, accounting for 28 percent of all malware. In 2006, Downloaders was the most common category. A downloader is a low-profile piece of malware that installs itself so that it can download and install a more sophisticated malware agent later.

"The X-Force security statistics report for 2006 predicted a continued rise in the sophistication of targeted, profit-motivated cyber attacks," said Kris Lamb, director of X-Force for IBM Internet Security Systems. "This directly correlates to the rise in popularity of Trojans that we are witnessing this year, as Trojans are often used by attackers to launch sustained, targeted attacks."

The report also says that underground, for-profit exploiters have adopted new marketing techniques. Among these is the option to "lease" an exploitive approach, cutting attackers' initial investment.

The IBM team reports that Spain has taken South Korea's place as the highest source of phishing e-mails, accounting for 17.9 percent of the worldwide volume. Phishing involves bogus emails that try to lure

recipients into revealing personal information such as passwords, bank account numbers and passwords.

Source: IBM

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