Virus sends costly messages from Android phones

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A mobile phone using Android phone software is seen at a telecom convention in Las Vegas. Mobile security firm Lookout has warned that a booby-trapped Movie Player application is infecting Android phones in Russia with a virus that sends costly text messages.

Mobile security firm Lookout on Tuesday warned that a booby-trapped Movie Player application is infecting Android phones in Russia with a virus that sends costly text messages.

Russia-based Kaspersky Lab discovered the malicious "Trojan" code hidden in a media player application people are enticed to download onto smartphones.

"The new malicious program penetrates smartphones running Android in

the guise of a harmless media player application," Kaspersky said in a blog post.

"The Trojan uses the system to begin sending SMSs to premium rate numbers without the owner's knowledge or consent, resulting in money passing from a user's account to that of the cybercriminals."

The Trojan has apparently only affected handsets operating on Google-backed Android software in Russia.

The Media Player program does ask users to authorize "services that cost you money" prior to installation, according to Lookout, which advised people to protect themselves by refusing to grant such permission.

"With the discovery of this new Android Trojan, it is more important than ever to pay attention to what you're downloading," Lookout said.

"Stay alert to ensure that you trust every app you download".

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