

CACR: MacDefender shows Apple users no longer immune from cyberattacks

May 25 2011

(PhysOrg.com) -- Long considered the shining example of computer security, Apple Macintosh computers are becoming serious targets of cyberattacks, according to Indiana University Center for Applied Cybersecurity Research Deputy Director Von Welch.

Mac users have recently been targeted by, and are increasingly falling victim to, a fake [software program](#) called "MacDefender," which poses as an [anti-virus](#) program that tricks users into installing it.

"MacDefender" is a type of [malware](#) known as scareware, because it uses fear to induce people into installing the software. Mac users may be browsing the Internet when a pop-up window appears that looks exactly like it's from your computer's own operating system. This pop-up window alerts users that their machine is infected and offers to scan for other viruses. The scan will report that it has found other viruses, and offers to clean the computer after the victim either registers the software or enters their [credit card information](#).

"It's not an out-of-control problem yet, but it's definitely a wake-up call and probably a sign of more things to come," Welch said. "For years, Mac users have enjoyed a relative freedom from viruses and other malware that have plagued Microsoft Windows users. The question that hung in the air was, 'Is this because Macs are more secure or because criminals just weren't interested in them because there are far more Windows users?' We may now be starting to see that question answered."

Welch offered the following tips for Mac users:

- If you hadn't planned on installing software when browsing the Internet, don't.
- If you've previously installed antivirus software, run it directly. Welch notes that many schools -- including IU -- and businesses offer antivirus software at no cost to users.
- Always go to trusted sources for buying antivirus software or anything else online. For example, do a search and see what others have said about buying from the site.

More information: For tips on this, and other online security and privacy issues, visit the Security Matters website at:
www.securitymatters.iu.edu .

Provided by Indiana University

Citation: CACR: MacDefender shows Apple users no longer immune from cyberattacks (2011, May 25) retrieved 20 April 2024 from <https://phys.org/news/2011-05-cacr-macdefender-apple-users-longer.html>

This document is subject to copyright. Apart from any fair dealing for the purpose of private study or research, no part may be reproduced without the written permission. The content is provided for information purposes only.