

Hackers aim ruse at Apple computer users

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This file photo shows customers trying out MacBook Air computers at a New York store. Hackers are out to trick Apple computer users into infecting Macintosh machines with malicious code pretending to be legitimate security software.

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Apple on Wednesday was warning about a "[phishing scam](#)" that stealthily directs Mac users to fake websites which pop-up bogus warnings that computers are infected with viruses.

Hackers attempt to scare people into installing programs that pretend to be virus blockers but are actually [malicious code](#).

"Its ultimate goal is to get the user's [credit card information](#) which may

be used for fraudulent purposes," Apple said at its support website, which detailed how to avoid or remove the virus.

Names of the fake [anti-virus](#) programs included MacDefender, MacProtector, and MacSecurity, according to Apple.

Hackers route people to booby-trapped websites by rigging online addresses to rank high in search engine results for topics of possible interest to Macintosh users, according to an Intego computer security blog.

"This application is very well designed, and looks professional," Intego said.

"There are a number of different screens, and the grammar and spelling are correct, the buttons are attractive, and the overall look and feel of the program give it a professional look."

Rogue security software, referred to as "scareware," was one of the most common ways for [cyber criminals](#) worldwide to bilk people out of money and steal information from computers, Microsoft said in a report this month.

The ploy seeks to dupe Internet users by pretending to find viruses and other problems on computers and then offering to sell a program to fix the situation. The software being hawked is a virus.

Computer users were advised to guard against threats by keeping programs updated, using reputable [security software](#), and not clicking links or opening files without making certain they are safe.

Windows computers dominate the worldwide market, making them popular targets for hackers. The rising popularity of Apple computers is

evidently catching the attention of cyber crooks.

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