

Google removes Android malware used to secretly mine bitcoin

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If you own an Android device, your phone might be mining bitcoin without you even knowing it. Five applications were recently removed from the Google Play store after they were discovered to be covertly using Android devices to mine bitcoin.

Mining requires a lot of computing power to solve complex calculations in order to create more bitcoins. To get the job done, miners usually create systems with many computers.

But now, it seems that at least one miner has turned to malware to take advantage of unsuspecting users and add their [mobile devices](#) into his or her mining system.

The mining apps that were recently removed worked by tricking users into downloading them by advertising themselves as wallpaper apps. Users thought they were getting an app with cool smartphone background images, but they were also getting an app that secretly used their device to mine bitcoin.

While users performed other tasks on their devices, the apps worked out bitcoin mining calculations in the background, draining users' batteries faster than normal.

Fortunately, the apps were removed by Google before any of them were downloaded by more than 500 users. The apps were first identified by Lookout, a company that makes security apps for mobile devices.

"Phones truly are tiny computers in your back pocket or purse," Lookout said in a blog post. "These devices are becoming more and more powerful, and people are starting to come up with ways to take advantage of that power."

Lookout has a system that constantly analyzes new apps for malware. It identified suspicious factors within these five apps, leading the company to examine them further. Lookout confirmed that they were malware apps mining bitcoin and then notified Google.

Lookout said it expects to see more mobile mining malware apps in the

future.

"Unless you have mobile security software that scans your apps, such as Lookout, it'd be hard to tell if you're infected with mobile mining malware," said Michael Bentley, Lookout's head of research and response, in an email to the Los Angeles Times. "However, if your phone is rapidly losing battery power, overheating, or generally behaving outside what you would consider normal, mobile mining [malware](#) could be the issue."

The apps that were removed are Beating Heart Live Wallpaper, Mens Club Live Wallpaper, Epic Smoke Live Wallpaper, Urban Pulse Live Wallpaper, and Anime Girls Live Wallpaper. Lookout recommends that [users](#) who installed these apps before they were taken off of Google Play remove them from their Android devices.

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