



When Can Malware Be Good?

I. Klein, CISSP, CISM, CIPP/US

August 6, 2013

First, a Warning

The Federal Bureau of Investigation's Internet Crime Complaint Center (IC3) recently issued another warning about a ransomware campaign using the name of the law enforcement agencies to extort money from unsuspecting victims. Ransomware is a form of malicious software (malware) used to intimidate victims into paying a fine to "unlock" their computers or data.

This version of ransomware, called Reveton, displays a warning from DHS that accuses victims of violating various U.S. laws and locks their computers. To unlock their computers and avoid legal issues, victims are told they must pay a \$300 fine via a prepaid money card.

This is not a legitimate communication from law enforcement, but rather an attempt to extort money from the victim.

Protect Yourself

If you have received this or something similar, do **not** follow the instructions in the warning and do **not** attempt to pay the fine.

The FBI recommends that you:

- Contact a reputable computer expert to assist with removing the malware.
- File a complaint at www.IC3.gov.
- Keep your operating systems and legitimate antivirus and antispyware software updated.

So How Can Reveton Be Good?

A man in Woodbridge, VA went to his local police station July 1 asking if he had warrants on file for child pornography. He said an "FBI Warning" message on his computer said he needed to pay a fine or a criminal investigation would begin.

The man voluntarily brought his computer to the police station, and officers found several inappropriate messages and photos of underage girls. The man was arrested July 23 and charged with three counts of possession of child pornography, one count of using a communication device to solicit certain offenses involving children, and one count of indecent liberties with a minor.

In this case, malware helped get a child pornographer off the streets.



City of Phoenix

ISPO's View

For More Information

To learn more:

- Link to FBI's latest [Reveton warning](#).
- Link to an article about the [man who turned himself into police](#).