Ransomware on the rampage

Currently the most prevalent money-making scheme employed by cyber-criminals, the rise of ransomware has been astonishing. According to the Cyber Threat Alliance report “Lucrative Ransomware Attacks”, throughout the whole of 2015 a total of $325 Million was taken using ransomware.

However the US Federal Bureau of Investigation reports that ransomware is now on the rampage, with the amount taken for the first three months of 2016 rising to $209 Million, more than eight times the total for 2015. At this rate ransomware is expected to yield close to $1 Billion by the end of the year unless individuals and organisations improve both their defences and security awareness.

The rise of ransomware

Although the first documented instance of ransomware was identified in 1989, it was only from 2013 that criminals realised the potential to monetise this type of attack when ransomware evolved to using RSA-1024 and AES-256 encryption. Cryptowall was the first ransomware to use RSA 2048, whilst Locky has affected 24 million since first appearing in mid-February 2016. Petya, causes a blue screen of death by overwriting the master boot record (MBR) of computer hard disk drives, meaning that it is impossible to load the Operating System even in Safe Mode. Something clearly needs to be done but don’t believe for a second that technology is enough. Expert security management and awareness programmes are key in combating the rising tide of ransomware.

What is Ransomware?

- A type of malicious software designed to block access to a computer system, files or system functions until a sum of money (the ransom) is paid by the victim.
- $325 Million extorted by Ransomware in 2015.
- $209 Million taken in just the first three months of 2016.

Mode of attack

- Compromised websites
- Email (Spam, Phishing)
- Other malware

Protecting against Ransomware

- Security awareness and education.
- A fully integrated advanced threat protection security ecosystem.
- Business continuity and Disaster Recovery.
Ransomware & cyber fraud protection

All companies that have suffered a high profile security incident through ransomware or cyber fraud had in place a firewall, antivirus protection and an IT department. It is clear that standard controls are not adequate to protect against these advanced threats.

For businesses to be protected against advanced targeted attacks they must both employ enhanced controls, specifically designed to quickly identify and repel attacks, they must also have expert resource on hand to monitor for incidents and to act as first responders and incident managers to manage the decisions making and reactions during a serious security incident.

FortiSecured by Infosec Partners

Infosec Partners’ FortiSecured platform provides the expert resource to conduct training and awareness programs at multiple levels within the business, testing the responses and reactions to multiple types of attacks, Infosec Partners then manage and monitor the security platform and are contracted to manage the incident process in the event of an attack.

The technology security platform is designed to extend the clients’ next generation firewall and AV protection into a fully integrated, seamless protection platform. Fortinet’s advanced controls around Sandbox / APT protection, email security and web security are integrated with endpoint software that protects all devices whether they are inside or outside of the corporate perimeter.

The FortiSecured platform is unique. It is the only fully integrated platform of security controls and expert resource available to businesses. The service is specifically designed to both reduce the likelihood of any attack and also to minimise the impact of any successful intrusion.

Infosec Partners are uniquely positioned to provide this service, being the first ever UK partner of excellence for Fortinet, experienced and certified to manage the entire range of security products along with holding multiple government and industry certifications for information protection and incident investigation. Contact us today to discover why we’re trusted by significant organisations and high profile individuals worldwide.