

'India third most vulnerable country to cyber threats'

India emerged as the third most vulnerable country in terms of risk of cyber threats, such as malware, spam and ransomware, in 2017, moving up one place over previous year, according to a report by security solutions provider Symantec.

In 2017, 5.09% of global threats detected were in India, slightly less than 5.11% in 2016. The U.S. (26.61%) was most vulnerable to such attacks, followed by China (10.95%), according to 'Internet Security Threat Report'.

The global threat ranking is based on eight metrics — malware, spam, phishing, bots, network attacks, web attacks, ransomware and cryptominers.

As per the report, India continues to be second most impacted by spam and bots, third most impacted by network attacks, and fourth most impacted by ransomware.

The report also pointed out that with the threat landscape becoming more diverse, attackers are working harder to discover new avenues of attack and cover their tracks while doing so.

"From the sudden spread of WannaCry and Petya/NotPetya, to the swift growth in coinminers, 2017 provided us with another reminder that digital security threats can come from new and unexpected sources," it said.

Cyber criminals, it said, are rapidly adding "cryptojacking" to their arsenal as the ransomware market becomes overpriced and overcrowded.

Real threat

"Cryptojacking is a rising threat to cyber and personal security," Tarun Kaura, Director, Enterprise Security Product Management, Asia Pacific and Japan, at Symantec said, adding that, "The massive profit incentive puts people, devices and organisations at risk of unauthorised coinminers siphoning resources from their systems, further motivating criminals to infiltrate everything from home PCs to giant data centers."

"This coin mining gold rush resulted in an 8,500% increase in detections of coinminers on endpoint computers during the final quarter of 2017."

While the immediate impact of coin mining is typically performance related — slowing down devices, overheating batteries and in some cases, rendering devices unusable— there are broader implications, particularly for organisations. "Corporate networks are at risk of shutdown from coinminers aggressively propagated across their environment. There may also be financial implications for organisations who get billed for cloud CPU usage by coinminers," Symantec said.

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