MENU

10 NEWS

WATCH LIVE
On Air 8:55AM

67°
Tampa, FL

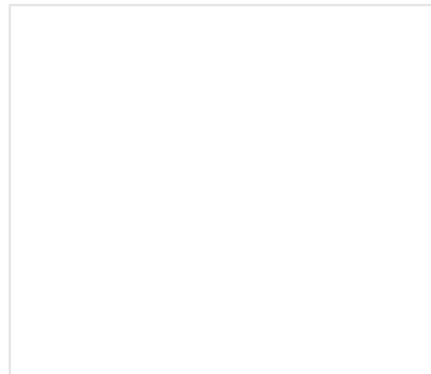*TECH*

Tampa #1 in nation for computer hacker attacks

Tampa has just been named the most-hacked city in the nation. Why us? And what can you do to protect yourself?

Author: Eric Glasser and WTSP , WTSP
Published: 6:48 PM EST January 5, 2015
Updated: 6:48 PM EST January 5, 2015

Tampa, FL -- Tampa is number one in the nation, but not for the reason you might hope.

A new study from EnigmaSoftware.com finds our region is the single-most hacked spot in the country when it comes to people's personal computers.

That keeps places like Performance Computer Group in South Tampa plenty busy, servicing computers hacked or hijacked by viruses and malicious software.

"Approximately 70 percent of the repairs we do is a virus removal," said owner Brett Kappes.

According to the study, Tampa is a whopping 561 percent above than the national average when it comes to computer infections on a per-capita basis.

The reasons, according to Enigma, include a rapidly increasing population and, well... pornography.

"They're one of the most common places for malware for hacking getting downloaded to your computer, etc," warns Sri Sridharan, who leads Florida's Center for Cyber Security located at the University of South Florida.

The program is helping train the next generation of cyber-sleuths to head off hack attacks. With a sophisticated program, they can monitor the almost-constant, real-time bombardment of hacking attempts from around the world.

To see a small percentage of them real hack attempts in real-time, click here
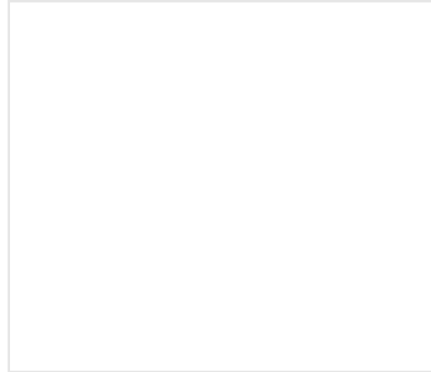
Tampa, says Sridharan, is a perfect storm of cyber vulnerability: elderly people who aren't cyber savvy, and often do not take enough precaution to safeguard their computers. Also, young people who aren't careful enough on social media, he says.

Tampa is also home to Military installations, universities and research labs. They're all prime hacker targets.

"And I think we saw in 2014 is only a minuscule amount of what you're going to see down the road, in the next year to two years," Sridharan warns.

Computer experts say they see no short-term solution in sight. Their advice includes protecting yourself and your personal computer by making sure you have the most recent update version of your cyber software.

Also, make sure you back up your personal computer files either with an external hard drive separate from your computer, or by using a cloud-based service to be able to retrieve a previous version of your files if corrupted.

Sridharan also suggests:

- Using complex passwords
- hanging passwords often
- Do not open external links form people you don't know
- Don't click on unfamiliar attachments
- Avoid using free or unsecured Wi-Fi
- Don't share personal info on social media

Here are the Top 20 most hacked cities, according to EnigmaSoftware.com:

1. Tampa 561.81% higher than the national average
2. Orlando 386.91% higher than the national average
3. St. Louis 369.37% higher than the national average
4. Atlanta 359.42% higher than the national average
5. Salt Lake City 306.65% higher than the national average
6. Denver 293.11% higher than the national average
7. Newark 260.85% higher than the national average
8. Madison, WI 225.17% higher than the national average
9. Cleveland 215.61% higher than the national average
10. Little Rock 215.61% higher than the national average
11. Cincinnati 182% higher than the national average
12. Washington, DC 169.56% higher than the national average
13. Miami 160.38% higher than the national average
14. Pittsburgh 135.49% higher than the national average
15. Irvine, CA CA +0.13% 112.07% higher than the national average
16. Richmond, VA 111.91% higher than the national average
17. Raleigh, NC 110.93% higher than the national average
18. Minneapolis 106.04% higher than the national average
19. Seattle 86.05% higher than the national average
20. Greensboro, NC 76.02% higher than the national average