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Windows 10 Email Scam: It's CryptoWare

by Jerry Stern

Now that Windows 10 is shipping, or more accurately, downloading by reservation, the scams have begun. Be on the lookout for emails, claiming to be from Microsoft, including a link to the download, or an attachment holding the upgrade. Don't click that link! It's a malware installer, and the payload, so far, has been CBT-Locker, which is ransomware that encrypts your system and holds your data for ransom.

Again, here's what to watch out for in an email that asks you to open a link or an attachment:

Who Sent it?
In this case, Microsoft isn't sending out direct links to any Windows 10 downloads, or attachments.

What is it offering?
The Windows 10 upgrade is arriving through the white reservation icon, as part of Windows Update. It's several Gigabytes in size; sending it by email wouldn't work.

Where does the link go?
You can float your mouse over any link, **without clicking** and the destination link will show at the bottom of your screen. If it is not going to a short, recognizable address that matches where it should go, don't click it. If it's going to a URL-shortening service, so it starts with bit.ly or goo.gl, it's going to redirect elsewhere--don't click.

How's it written?
Most scams, not all, have errors in grammar, punctuation (especially apostrophes), and will include odd word choices. They'll include logical goofs: they ask you to open a receipt to pick up a package from your "nearest" post office, or send legal information like a court notice from an agency like the IRS that will **never** make first

contact with you by email. They'll capitalize the first letter of all nouns, which is a typical error of non-native English users. They'll frequently leave out *a* or *the* where we would include it.

Windows 10: Upgrade Now??? (A Recurring Question)

My recommendation is still to wait if you are running Windows 7, a domain-based network, or ANY vertical market program, like a specialty accounting package just for your industry, or remote access software that connects to your office. Many of our repair tools aren't updated yet; software vendors in general are catching up, slowly.

On the other hand, if none of the above applies, Windows 10 is now looking pretty good on touchscreen notebooks and 'all-in-one' combo systems that are running Windows 8.0 or 8.1. Create a full image backup first (see our January newsletter), and go ahead and run the upgrade. Or call us and we'll do it and the before and after image backups, and whatever else is needed, at a flat rate with no surprises.

Shortcut Charts are Here for Windows 10

The fastest way to work in Windows is to use a keyboard. Learning the basic shortcuts will keep you from reaching for a mechanical rodent. And the new Windows 10 version of our keyboard shortcuts chart is now available here, along with the Win 8 and Win 7 versions. And we have post cards of the chart, ask when we visit.

FileTiger Users: Testers Needed

Using FileTiger? It's our dual-window file manager program, and it's been working just fine through the last few Windows versions, but it's time to upgrade for Windows 10. The new version isn't ready yet, but there will be a beta test version soon; if you're already a FileTiger user, contact us for a beta version. (There will be free upgrades after launch for all testers who report back either that it's working or that they found an issue.)

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