CYBER SECURITY TIPS

RANSOMWARE PROTECTION

The threat of blackmail by ransomware has never been higher. The 'bad guys' are targeting people and businesses more effectively and in increasingly ingenious ways. That means that you will never be entirely secure. But by following these rules you can protect yourself from ransomware:

1. Back up anything you don't want to lose

If you have photos, videos, documents, emails, spread sheets, contacts, calendars that you don't want to lose then make sure you know where they are and get them backed up somewhere safe. To get you started try these links to articles on backing up iOS devices, Android devices, Windows PCs and Apple Macs.

2. Install security software

All your devices need to be protected from ransomware. If you don't already have some security software, then look at the AV Test website for up to date, independent reviews. Get the software installed and make sure that you keep it up to date.

3. Keep your devices up to date

The latest version of your software is the most secure. Keep an eye out for updates and apply them when prompted. If you have software that you don't need then remove it from your device. AND don't download apps or application unless you are happy they are legitimate. If in doubt look them up on Google before installing.

4. Be suspicious

I know it's daunting but you are the first line of defence. So be suspicious of anything that looks unfamiliar. Take a close look at emails with attachments or links before clicking. Whenever something is free, be wary. Once you've clicked on an untrusted link there are two possible outcomes. At best, you'll have to watch an advert, or give away your email address. At worst, you will be at risk from identity theft or ransomware.

5. Don't give out personal information

The more the bad guys know about you the easier it is for them to scam you. Key pieces of information include your full name, contact details, date of birth, mother's maiden name, national insurance number and, of course, financial information. Guard your personal information and be wary whenever you are asked for it.

6. Get educated

Learning more about ransomware will help reduce the chance of unhappy outcomes. Understanding how you can be attacked will help you avoid a scam. Knowing how to react if you've been compromised will reduce the impact. Start at the No More Ransom website.

7. If you spot something

Concerned that something weird is happening on your machine? Disconnect immediately from wi-fi and/or unplug your network cable. Then call an expert. Never pay the ransom. There is no guarantee that you will get your data back. You could also be added to a 'suckers' list and be attacked again.

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