BANK OF AMERICA

CYBER SECURITY

# Be Cyber Secure: Detecting Malware

## Tips for protecting yourself — and responding if you've been targeted

Malware, or 'malicious software,' is a term for any software program or code designed to compromise or damage electronic devices. It comes in many forms, including ransomware, trojans, spyware, worms, adware, botnets and viruses. Cyber criminals most frequently distribute malware through infected websites or phishing, which can target email, social media, instant messages and texts.

Awareness and education create the first line of defense against malware. The right tools and regular maintenance provide extra protection. Here is a combination of best practices that can help keep your devices and connections malware-free.

## How to Protect Yourself

**Be proactive:**

- **Do not reply to emails or texts,** or click on links from unknown senders — they may be phishing attempts.
- **Invest in a robust security software package** that can flag suspicious emails and websites and check newly downloaded software programs for malware.
- **Update your applications and operating systems regularly** and turn on automatic updates.
- **Verify website credentials.** Since URLs can be spoofed, suspicious address links in messages should be confirmed by the message sender through another means of contact.
- **Create strong passwords** and consider using a password manager. Do not use personal information, such as family names, and avoid using the same login credentials for multiple accounts.

**If you suspect a malware download:**

- **Disconnect your devices** and network from the internet.
- **Identify the type of incident you've suffered,** what data might be compromised and what was lost or damaged.
- **Scan your computer and network** to find infected files or bad programs. Recover any corrupted files from backups.
- **Download and install** software patches and security updates.
- **Change all passwords** that may have been compromised.
- **Check all financial accounts.** If you see any signs of fraudulent activity or a financial loss, contact your bank and law enforcement.

## The Growing Threat, Measured

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Rank of malware among cyber security threat vectors in 2019.[1]

**34.3 million**

Instances of malware on IoT devices in 2019.[2]

**72%**

Annual growth in cost of cyber crime over the past five years.[3]

[1] McAfee Labs Threat Report, August 2019.

[2] 2020 SonicWall Cyber Threat Report.

[3] Accenture State of Cybersecurity Report, 2019.

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## How to Protect Yourself Continued

**Be proactive:**

- **Change the manufacturer's default settings.** Connected devices often come with default usernames and passwords that are published on the internet. Change them to something unique as soon as you can.
- **Freeze your credit report** if you're not applying for a new loan any time soon. That way, even if your identity is stolen, criminals can't request your credit details to open new lines of credit in your name.

**If you suspect a malware download:**

- **Document everything** that happened and every step you've taken in response. This will help any investigation — and decrease the likelihood of a future incident.
- **Contact a security expert** if you need more assistance. If the infected device is your employer's property, report the incident to the company's IT department.

## Why It's Important

Cyber criminals exploit every digital channel to infect devices and steal personal assets.

**Once they have gained access to your network and data, cyber criminals can:**

- **Access your banking and credit card accounts** to potentially transfer or divert funds.
- **Take control of your device,** encrypt its data and demand a ransom to regain access.
- **Spy on** your online activities.
- **Use your system** as a launchpad for new cyber events.

### Global Information Security at Bank of America

The GIS team is made up of information security professionals staffing multiple security operations centers across the globe that work 24/7 to keep data and information safe.

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