

Ransomware

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<https://www.fbi.gov/scams-and-safety/common-scams-and-crimes/ransomware>

Ransomware is a type of malicious software, or malware, that prevents you from accessing your computer files, systems, or networks and demands you pay a ransom for their return. Ransomware attacks can cause costly disruptions to operations and the loss of critical information and data.

You can unknowingly download ransomware onto a computer by opening an email attachment, clicking an ad, following a link, or even visiting a website that's embedded with malware.

Once the code is loaded on a computer, it will lock access to the computer itself or data and files stored there. More menacing versions can encrypt files and folders on local drives, attached drives, and even networked computers.

Most of the time, you don't know your computer has been infected. You usually discover it when you can no longer access your data or you see computer messages letting you know about the attack and demanding ransom payments.

Tips for Avoiding Ransomware

The best way to avoid being exposed to ransomware—or any type of malware—is to be a cautious and conscientious computer user. Malware distributors have gotten increasingly savvy, and you need to be careful about what you download and click on.

Other tips:

Keep operating systems, software, and applications current and up to date.

Make sure anti-virus and anti-malware solutions are set to automatically update and run regular scans.

Back up data regularly and double-check that those backups were completed.

Secure your backups. Make sure they are not connected to the computers and networks they are backing up.

Create a continuity plan in case your business or organization is the victim of a ransomware attack.

All about ransomware attacks

Ransomware made headlines throughout 2021 and continues to make the news in 2022. You may have heard stories of attacks on large companies, organizations, or government agencies, or perhaps you as an individual have experienced a ransomware attack on your own device. It's a significant

problem and a scary prospect to have all of your files and data held hostage until you pay up. If you want to know more about this threat, read on to learn about ransomware's different forms, how you get it, where it comes from, who it targets, and ultimately, what you can do to protect against it.