Mobile Phones Security

Today's mobile phones not only allow us to make calls and send text messages but have evolved into mini computers commonly referred to as smartphones, allowing us to access email, browse the Web and perform online transactions. One would feel uncomfortable leaving home without one's smartphone. Would you feel similarly uncomfortable knowing your smartphone could be the target of attackers?

Smartphones Threats

Malware targeting smartphones have been on the rise. Some malware are spyware that access a user's data without the user's permission or knowledge. Spyware can spy on user's contact listing, phone call history, text messages and camera photos. Other malware target financial benefits such as sending unsolicited premium text messages to a user's contact listing.

How did Malware get in?

Repackaging is a very common tactic, in which a malware writer takes a legitimate application, modifies it to include malicious code, then republishes it to an app market or download site. The malware writer might further entice users by repackaging popular paid apps and making it available for free. The repackaging technique is highly effective because it is often difficult for users to tell the difference between a legitimate app and its repackaged twin.

Smartphones are also susceptible to drive-by downloads attacks when used to browse the Web, and can be secretly infected with malware simply by visiting such a website, even without users attempting to download anything themselves.

Protecting my Smartphone

Stop Jailbreaking/Rooting
Smartphones like computers, run on a operating system (OS). The OS has a security sandbox design which is meant to limit the data and resources each app is allowed to access. Jailbreaking or rooting the OS would gain complete control over everything on the smartphone, similarly granting the same access to malware.

Choosing the application
Get app from trusted source and vet the permissions required by the app. For example, does a game really need to be able to send premium text messages or access your contact list?

Update the OS
Smartphone manufacturer will regularly release updates for the OS which includes new functionalities and patches for security vulnerabilities. Updating your mobile OS allows you to enjoy the latest features and functionalities while protecting your information.

Install mobile security application
Install mobile security app that scans every app you download for malware and spyware. For extra protection, make sure your security app can also protect from unsafe websites.

Security Questionnaire

1. Do you password protect your smartphone?
   a. Yes
   b. No
2. Is your smartphone OS updated to the latest available?
   a. Yes
   b. No
3a. Is encryption available on your smartphone?
   a. Yes – Continue to 3b
   b. No – Continue to 4

3b. Is encryption enabled on your smartphone?
   a. Yes
   b. No

4. Is your smartphone jailbroken/rooted?
   a. Yes
   b. No

5. Is a security software installed on your smartphone?
   a. Yes
   b. No

Total up your score and see how you fare?

	1	2	3b	4	5
a.	1	1	1	0	1
b.	0	0	0	1	0

WELL DONE, if you have scored 5 points!
You have a good knowledge of how to protect your smartphone from cyber threats.
Otherwise, the lower your score, the higher is the risk in subjecting your smartphone to malware.

Security Tips

- Password protect your smartphone
- Update smartphone's operating system
- Enable encryption on your smartphone
- Do not jailbreak/root your smartphone
- Get app only from a trusted source
- Install a mobile security app
- Review permission request of app
- Turn off WiFi and Bluetooth when not in use
- Back up your smartphone data

Interesting Reads

- Securing your smartphone – https://www.gosafeonline.sg/securing-your-smartphone
- Mobile Phone - https://www.mylookout.com/mobile-threat-report

In the next issue...

The Web provide exponential information ranging from the latest news, research material for school projects, travel tips for planning travel itineraries and much more.
Find out what are the safe surfing tips that you could utilise to protect your pc and smartphone, ensuring an enjoyable surfing experience.
Let us know what you like about this newsletter and what we can do to better serve you. Write to us at contact_us@gosafeonline.sg.

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Woo Hoo ~

BE AWARE,

RESPONSIBLE AND

SECURE!