Cloud-based Email Threats Capitalized on Chaos of COVID-19

Trend Micro intercepted a surge in malware, phishing and credential theft

DALLAS, March 2, 2021 /PRNewswire/ -- Trend Micro Incorporated (TYO: 4704; TSE: 4704), the leader in cloud security, today revealed that it blocked 16.7 million high-risk email threats that slipped past webmail providers' native filters. This amounts to an increase of nearly a third on 2019 figures.

The new statistics are provided by Trend Micro's Cloud App Security (CAS), an API-based solution that provides second-layer protection for Microsoft Exchange Online, Gmail, and a host of other services.[i]

To read the full *Trend Micro Cloud App Security Threat Report 2020,* please visit here.

"COVID-19 forced many organizations to accelerate their digital adoption plans, and SaaS apps have become indispensable to remote workers. However, where there are users, there are also threats and we've seen a spike in attacks targeting organizations' perceived weakest link during the pandemic," said Wendy Moore, vice president of product marketing for Trend Micro. "Trend Micro Cloud App Security has been indispensable in providing an extra layer of protection — each one of those nearly 17 million threats previously missed represents a risk of corporate data theft, ransomware and fraud."

Detections of malware, credential theft and phishing emails all recorded double-digit year-on-year increases in 2020, while BEC volumes dropped slightly.

Malware-laden emails: Trend Micro detected 1.1 million emails containing malware that would otherwise have appeared in users' inboxes, up 16% on 2019 figures. These included many Emotet and Trickbot attacks which are often the precursor to targeted ransomware.

Phishing: Trend Micro intercepted over 6.9 million phishing emails in 2020, a 19% increase from the previous year. Discounting credential phishing, the number of threats in this category surged 41% over the period. COVID-19 was a common lure, as were big-name brands like Netflix that have become popular during the pandemic. Attackers were typically looking for personal and financial information to monetize.

Credential phishing: Trend Micro detected nearly 5.5 million attempts to steal users' credentials that were allowed through by existing cloud native security filters. This was a 14% increase on 2019 and accounted for the vast majority of detected phishing emails. Attackers are increasingly supplementing these with phone-based vishing attacks.

Business email compromise (BEC): Although BEC detections declined 18% year-on-year, average losses continue to rise — increasing 48% from the first to the second quarter of 2020.

Trend Micro Cloud App Security offers comprehensive multi-layered protection for platforms such as Microsoft 365 and Google Workspace via:

- Machine learning-powered Writing Style DNA to spot BEC
- Computer vision and AI for credential phishing detection
- Sandbox malware analysis
- Document exploit detection
- File, email, and web reputation technologies
- Data loss prevention (DLP)
- Trend Micro Vision One, a comprehensive XDR solution providing investigation, detection, and response across your endpoints, email, network, and servers.

About Trend Micro

Trend Micro, a global leader in cybersecurity, helps make the world safe for exchanging digital information. Leveraging over 30 years of security expertise, global threat research, and continuous innovation, Trend Micro enables resilience for businesses, governments, and consumers with connected solutions across cloud workloads, endpoints, email, IIoT, and networks. Our XGen™ security strategy powers our solutions with a cross-generational blend of threat-defense techniques that are optimized for key environments and leverage shared threat intelligence for better, faster protection. With over 6,700 employees in 65 countries, and the world's most advanced global threat research and intelligence, Trend Micro enables organizations to secure their connected world. www.trendmicro.com

[i] It also protects various cloud-based applications and services, including Microsoft OneDrive for Business, SharePoint Online, Microsoft Teams, Google Drive, Box, Dropbox, and Salesforce.

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