cyberthint

RANSOMWARE REPORT

AUGUST

2023 AUGUST

PREPARED BY CYBERTHINT THREAT HUNTERS

CYBERTHINT.IO

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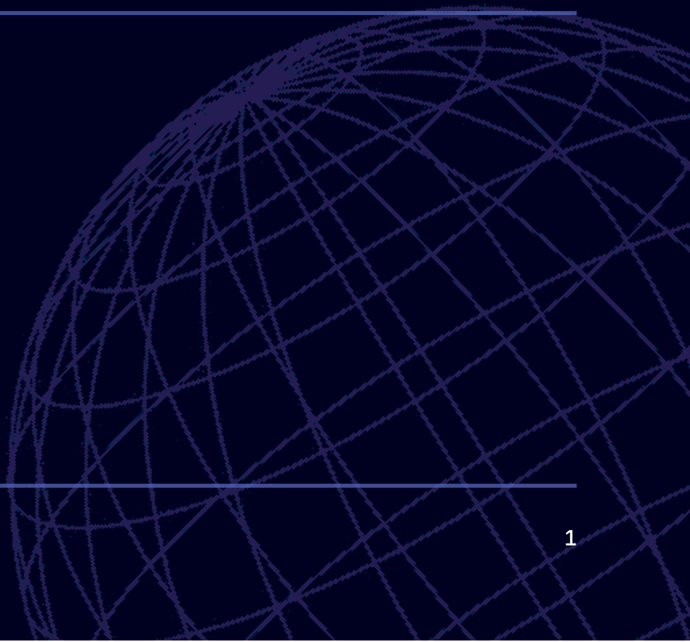


Introduction

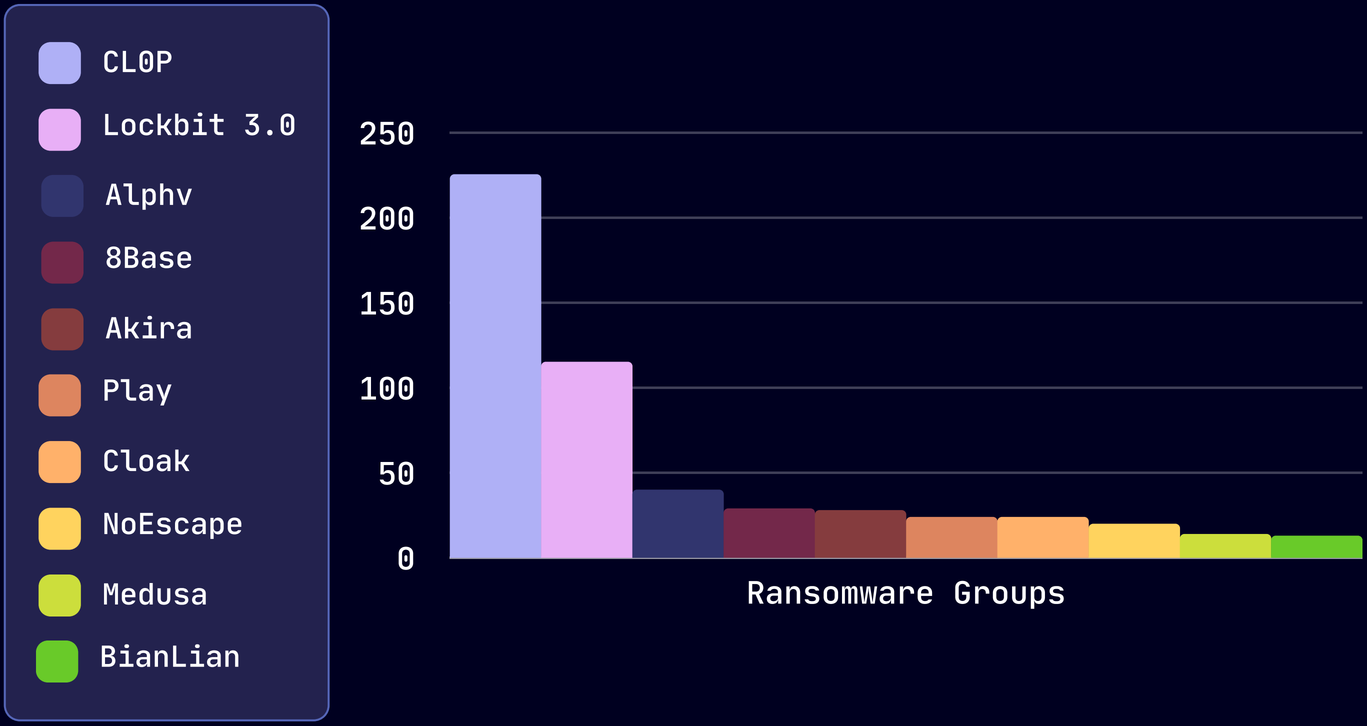
Welcome to Cyberthint's monthly Ransomware Tracking report, a compilation of statistical data gathered as Cyberthint threat hunters closely monitor the activity and behavior of ransomware groups.

Cyberthint threat hunters use the following six-point methodology when tracking ransomware groups on the Darkweb.

#	Ransomware Tracking Methodology
1.	**Collecting Data Sources:** We collect all data from sources related to ransomware groups operating on the Darkweb.
2.	**Data Analysis and Classification:** We analyze the data collected from the related sources and classify them according to ransomware groups.
3.	**Examination of Distribution Methods:** We analyze the distribution methods and strategies of ransomware groups using the available data that we have.
4.	**Monitoring Ransomware Campaigns:** By tracking large-scale ransomware campaigns, we observe changes in strategies adopted by ransomware groups.
5.	**Monitoring Ransom Payments:** We track crypto wallets that we have identified as belonging to ransomware groups and in this way, we can predict the sectors and countries they may target in the future.
6.	**Protection and Recommendations:** Based on the data and statistics collected and analyzed during Ransomware Tracking, we identify measures to safeguard against these attacks.

Most Active Ransomware Groups

Cyberthint threat hunters have identified the top 10 ransomware groups that made the most attacks in August as a result of the data they collected. This data is sourced from victim announcements shared on the groups' Darkweb websites, and attacks not announced on these sites are not included in this analysis.



Ransomware Attacks Increased in August

Ransomware attacks increased by 38% compared to July. A total of 553 ransomware attacks were recorded in August.

CLOP Increased the Number of Victims

The number of victims of the CLOP ransomware group has increased by 125% compared to July.

LockBit Increased the Number of Victims

The number of victims of the LockBit ransomware group increased by 98% compared to July.

Akira Increased the Number of Victims

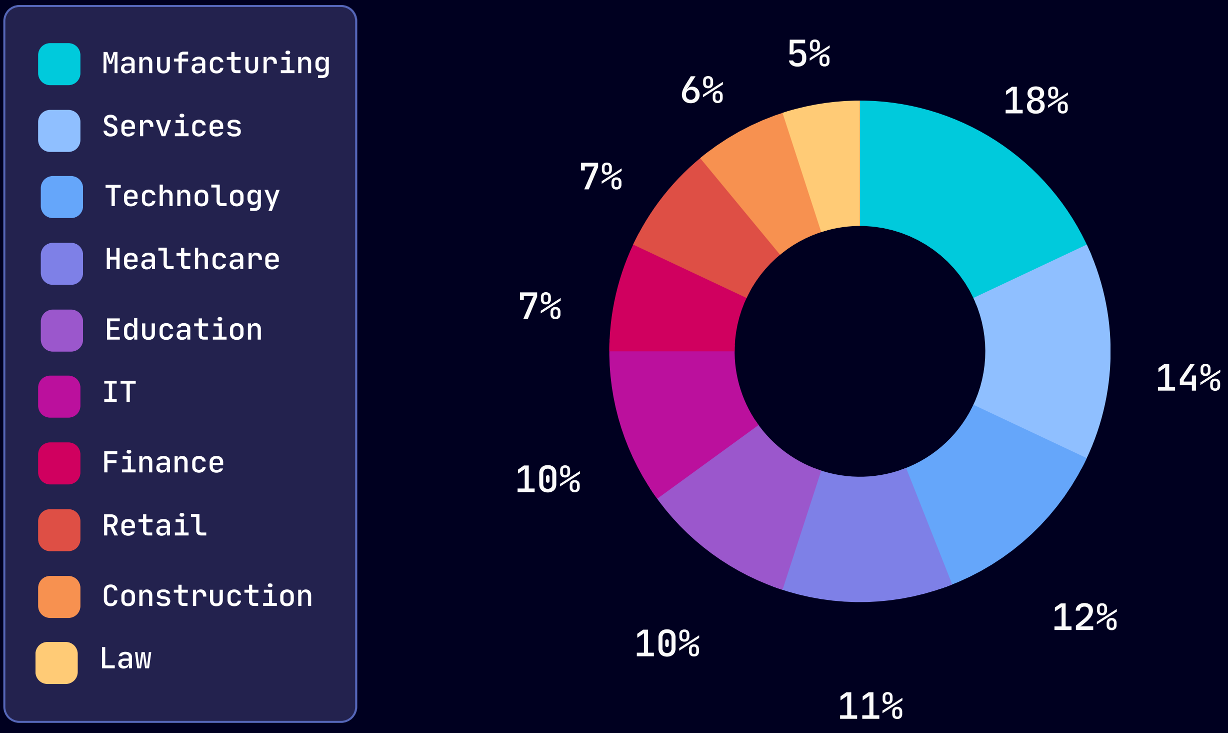
The number of victims of the Akira ransomware group increased by 55% compared to July.

NoEscape Increased the Number of Victims

The number of victims of the NoEscape ransomware group increased by 17% compared to July.

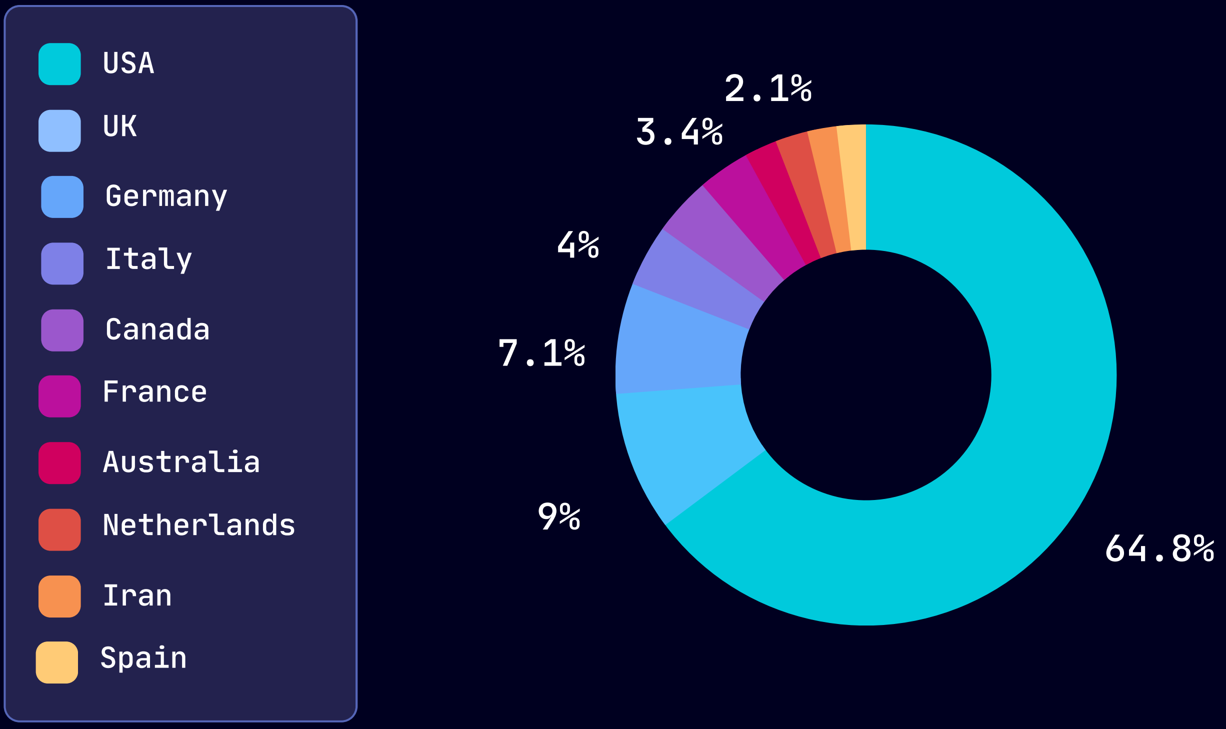
Sectors Most Affected by Ransomware Attacks

Cyberthint threat hunters have identified based on the collected data the sectors most targeted by ransomware attacks in August. This data is derived from victim announcements posted by ransomware groups on their own websites on the darkweb, and does not include attacks that they did not announce on their websites.



Countries Most Affected by Ransomware Attacks

Cyberthint threat hunters collected data to identify the countries that suffered the most ransomware attacks in August. This data is derived from victim announcements posted by ransomware groups on their own websites on the darkweb, and does not include attacks they did not announce on their websites.

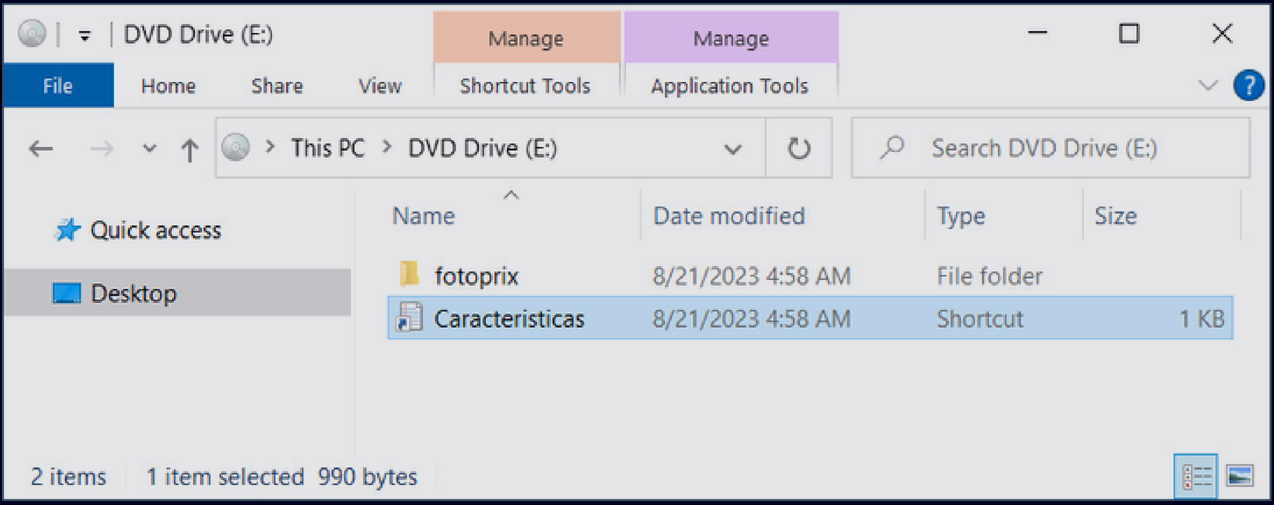


Cyber Incidents and Predictions

Spanish National Police has issued a warning about a ransomware campaign after the LockBit ransomware gang targeted architecture firms in the country through phishing emails.

Using the non-existent domain name "fotoprix.eu", the threat actors pretend to be a newly opened photography company in their phishing emails. They send a few emails to victim companies requesting a facility renovation/development plan and a cost estimate for the job, then, after gaining their trust, they request a meeting and send the victim a file with the ".img" extension that will execute the malicious code, pretending to be a construction project.

When the victims click on the file with the ".img" extension, which they think belongs to the construction project, a new disk with a folder and a shortcut file is mounted in Windows. When the shortcut file named "Caracteristicas" is clicked, a malicious python script in the folder named "fotoprix" is executed, which checks if the user is an administrator and if not, UAC is bypassed. It then executes the LockBit loader ransomware.



Name	Date modified	Type	Size
fotoprix	8/21/2023 4:58 AM	File folder	
Caracteristicas	8/21/2023 4:58 AM	Shortcut	1 KB

2 items 1 item selected 990 bytes

Cyberthint threat hunters predict that the CVE-2023-38831 vulnerability discovered in Winrar software in August is likely to be used in the future in sophisticated ransomware campaigns and that ransomware campaigns can be organized by exploiting this vulnerability.

Ways to Prevent Ransomware Attacks

1. **Use Strong Passwords:** Create complex, long and unique passwords for each account.
2. **Don't Ignore Software Updates:** Regularly update the operating system, applications, services and antivirus programs.
3. **Use Antivirus and Security Software:** Regularly scan your system for malware using reliable antivirus software.
4. **Beware of Emails:** Avoid clicking on suspicious email attachments or links.
5. **Secure File Sharing:** Share your files using trusted and secure sharing platforms.
6. **Backup Data:** Back up all your important data regularly. Also pay attention to the security of the backup.
7. **Training and Awareness:** Educate yourself and your employees about ransomware and cyber threats.
8. **Use Advanced Authentication:** Increase the protection level of your accounts by taking additional security measures such as two-factor authentication.
9. **Network Security:** Protect your network using firewalls, network monitoring and security solutions.
10. **Malware Protection:** Take effective measures to detect and block malware that may be come via email, web and other means.
11. **Application Permissions:** Do not give unnecessary permissions to applications and files. You can defend against attacks by restricting permissions you don't need.
12. **Download from Trusted Sources:** Download software and applications only from official and trusted sources. Stay away from pirated or suspicious sources.

Checklist During a Ransomware Attack

1. Isolate Infected Systems: Immediately isolate affected systems from the network to prevent the ransomware from spreading further.

2. Alert Management: Notify relevant stakeholders, including management, legal, and IT teams, about the attack.

3. Gather Information: Document all available information about the attack, including the ransom note, malware samples, and affected systems.

4. Engage Incident Response Team: If available, involve your incident response team to lead the investigation and recovery efforts.

5. Assessment: Determine the scope and impact of the attack on your systems and data.

6. Containment: Identify the ransomware variant and apply appropriate measures to contain the attack, such as disabling compromised accounts or network segments.

7. Data Backup Check: Verify the integrity of your data backups to ensure they are not compromised. Use clean backup data for recovery.

8. Communication Plan: Develop a communication plan for informing employees, customers, and partners about the situation, while adhering to legal and regulatory requirements.

9. Malware Analysis: Conduct analysis on the ransomware to understand its behavior, possible decryption methods, and potential vulnerabilities.

10. Engage Law Enforcement: If necessary, involve law enforcement agencies and share relevant information with them.

11. Recovery Strategy: Develop a recovery strategy based on the nature of the attack, whether it's possible to decrypt files, or if you need to rebuild systems from scratch.

12. Negotiation Consideration: Evaluate the risks and benefits of negotiating with the attackers for decryption keys. This is a complex decision with legal and ethical considerations.

13. User Education: Reinforce user education on cybersecurity practices to prevent future attacks.

14. Patch and Update: Identify and patch vulnerabilities that were exploited to deliver the ransomware.

15. Monitor and Analyze: Continuously monitor for signs of the ransomware reactivating or any new vulnerabilities being exploited.

16. Forensics: Conduct a thorough forensic analysis to understand how the attack occurred and whether any data was exfiltrated.

17. Post-Incident Review: After the attack is contained, conduct a review of the incident response process to identify areas for improvement.

18. Risk Mitigation: Implement security measures to prevent similar attacks in the future, such as endpoint detection and response (EDR) solutions, email filtering, and user training.

How Cyberthint Can Help You To Prevent Ransomware Attacks

Data Leakage Monitoring

It regularly inspects whether there is a data leak related to your organization. If it detects anything, it notifies you.

Attack Surface Detection

Every asset open to the internet is a potential attack point. Cyberthint detects them for you and notifies you of potential breach points.

Vulnerability Intelligence

It notifies you about the vulnerabilities detected by regular vulnerability scans with its solutions.

Brand Monitoring

It detects potential phishing attacks on you and your employees by impersonating your organization in advance and takedown the impersonated/fake; domain name/social media account before the attack can be made.

We know what information hackers have on you!

Cyberthint is an unified cyber threat intelligence platform that allows you to take precautions against cyber threats that may affect your company and employees in cyberspace.

Be aware of cyber threats targeting your organization in advance with Cyberthint's advanced cyber threat intelligence technology!

With Cyberthint, you can monitor and identify advanced threats and take early action.

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