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'Holy Spirit' Infects Russian Computers

By The Moscow Times

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Adding a spiritual dimension to the world of hacking, a new Trojan virus has emerged in Russia that locks computers and demands money for church repairs.

Victims may feel the urge to pray if their computers are hit by the malware, which claims to be acting "in the name of the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit." More specifically, the Trojan-Dropper.Win32.Dapato.dggc virus claims to be moved by the last of the three aspects of the Trinity to lock up user's files.

Recovery is promised in return for a donation, which is allegedly to be spent on church restoration, the Kaspersky Lab antivirus company reported on its corporate blog.

A similar trick is often employed in the nonvirtual world by Russian beggars, who dress up as priests and pretend to collect money for church needs.

The Russian-language Trojan is distributed as a .zip archive containing unspecified court documents allegedly intended for the user, Kaspersky Lab said on the blog Monday.

The hackers behind the spiritual computer sabotage have not been identified. The Russian Orthodox Church has not commented on the allegedly pious malware at the time of publication.

Russia is undergoing an alleged religious revival, with numbers of believers — though not churchgoers — skyrocketing in recent years, according to polls.

Separately, Russia outranked the U.S., Germany, China and Poland for the number of cyber-attacks on computers in 2013, Kaspersky Lab reported in December.

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