

GOVERNMENT OF PAKISTAN  
CABINET SECRETARIAT, CABINET DIVISION  
NATIONAL TELECOM & INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY SECURITY BOARD  
(NTISB-II)

No. 1-5/2003 (NTISB-II)

Islamabad 31 July, 2018

Subject: Advisory - Prevention Against Cyber Espionage (Advisory No 145)

1. Introduction. The IT security researchers have discovered an adware "PBot (PythonBot)" written in Python language targeting Windows-based computers. The adware spams an infected computer with advertisements and also installs cryptocurrency miner and ad extensions in the browser.

2. Technical Analysis.

- a. **Adware's** are Programs designed to launch advertisements on infected computers and/or to re-direct search engine results to promotional web sites.
- b. **Malware developers** are constantly releasing new versions, each of which complicates the script of obfuscation, important added feature is the presence of a module that updates scripts and downloads fresh browser extensions.
- c. The browser extension is used to spam banners on the page visited by the victim which redirects them to advertising sites to generate revenue, while the cryptominer uses computing power (CPU) of the system to generate crypto currency.
- d. **Pbot** might also cause below mentioned damage s described under:-
  - (1) The loss of important data.
  - (2) Serious system malfunction because of crypto mining.
  - (3) Continuous pop-up ads and redirects while browsing the Internet.
  - (4) Making the system vulnerable to other this.
  - (5) Leading its victims to money loss or eve unity theft.
- e. **Information tracking** is also implemented PythonBot, which typically collects users' search terms, mostly visited On names, 'computer's IP address, its location and similar data.

3. Distribution Method.

- a. **PBot** is generally distributed through partner sites whose implement scripts to redirect users to sponsored links. Details of the standard PBot propagation scheme as under-
  - (1) The user visits the partner site.
  - (2) When any point on the page is clicked, a new browser window pops up that opens an intermediate link.

03 AUG 2018

M(A)

M(IT) ✓

A.S (Rev. Div.)

1328-11 (BOT-11)  
6-8-18

06/08/18  
93567-18  
9 (CIT)  
6

BR eDOX Dy. No. 93567-18  
Received by J.Ch. Sectt.  
on 03 AUG 2018

Partly to (CIT) as per previous practice  
Asst (IT)

- (3) The **intermediate link** redirects the user to the **PBOt** ,download page, which is tasked with downloading and running the adware on the victim computer.

4. **Mitigation Measures.** Following best practices are suggested in this regard:-
- a. It is advised to be vigilant while browsing and refrain from visiting unknown sites or clicking links sent by unknown senders.
  - b. **Anti-malware** solution (e.g. Reimage, Plumbytes Anti-Malware, Malwarebytes) is required to remove **PBot** virus as there is **no manual** method to remove it.
  - c. After removal of malware, it is strongly recommended to **refresh computer system** and **browsers**. Malicious content can still be hiding and waiting for its chance recover.
  - d. Don't open any word document received via **email** or any **unknown resource**.
  - e. Use **latest** and **updated** version of **Microsoft office**.
  - f. **Install and UPDATE** well reputed **antiviruses** such as Kaspersky, Bitdefender, Nod 32, Avast etc.
5. **Recommendations.**
- a. It is advised to strictly follow all **mitigation measures** discussed at para 4.
  - b. Keep all the **software's** and **operating system** (OS) up-to-date.
  - c. Train employees on **web browser security** and educate with basic **awareness of cyber security**.
6. Forwarded for perusal and dissemination of information to all concerned, please.

  
Major  
(Ch Noman Firdous)  
Assistant Secretary-II (NTISB)  
Ph# 051-9204560

**All Secretaries of Ministries / Divisions of Federal Government and Chief Secretaries of Provincial Governments**

Copy to :-

SPS to Cabinet Secretary, Cabinet Division , Islamabad  
PS to AS-I Cabinet Division, Islamabad  
PS to AS-III, Cabinet Division, Islamabad  
APS Secretary, NTISB  
APS Deputy Secretary, NTISB