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Sheffield cyber attacks four times national average
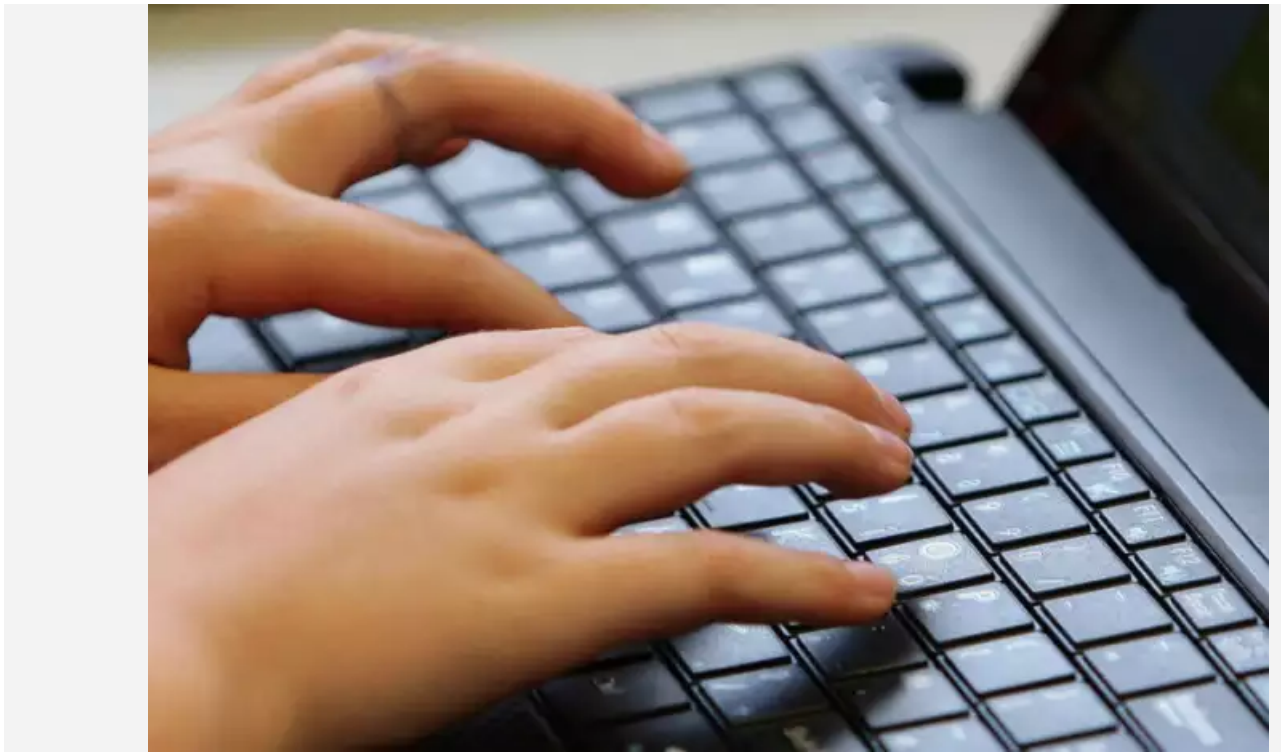
Cyber attacks

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Sheffield has more than four times the national average of cyber attacks, according to a new report.

With the nation's biggest population, London had the most actual number of computer infections last year with 1,928,098.

But, calculated per head, the capital ended up way behind first placed Manchester (280,905 infections), which was out on its own with nine times the average rate and Sheffield, which came second in the list of 50 cities worst hit by hackers.

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London was third in the list with residents hacked at a rate of 3.9 times higher, say experts at US-based .

Derby and Southampton rounded out the top five.

The anti-hacking specialists analysed more than three million infections that hit British computers last yea

"It's interesting to see how the infection rate varies from city to city," said Patrick Morganelli, Senior Vice P of Technology at EnigmaSoftware.com, makers of SpyHunt anti-spyware products.

What makes one city have higher than normal infection rates? Morganelli says that is very hard to tell.

"I wish there was an easy way to determine what makes people in one area more susceptible to malware infections," he said. "But there are so many different ways that infections can end up on computers that it's to make any generalisations about why certain people in certain cities seem to have more than others."

One of the most common ways malware infections end up on computers is from web sites that contain inf content or that ask users to download files that contain infected content.

Many times, those are adult web sites.

Users are often asked to download updates to their web browser video players so that they can watch adu videos. Instead of downloading an update, the user downloads an infection.

"We're not saying that people in Manchester, Sheffield, and London are visiting more adult web sites than in other cities," Morganellis says.

"But that still is one of the biggest sources of the malware that our software detects."

The other biggest source of malware infections is when people are tricked into clicking on links that either download malware or take them to a web site that has malware on it. Those links can come in the form of that look like something legitimate, or in social media messages that have been hijacked by hackers.

"Because of the growth in online communication - be it Facebook, LinkedIN, Twitter, Pinterest, Instagram are now more and more ways for bad guys to reach out to people and trick them into clicking on links," Mo said.

Online shopping is another source of infections. People who click on links in emails promising great deals people who scour the internet looking for the best prices can sometimes end up clicking on a link that lead infection.

"The best way to protect yourself is to have a trusted anti-virus and anti-malware program installed and up regularly," added Morganelli.

"Then, it's always best to think about that link. Before you click on something in an email or social media message, think for just a couple seconds about whether what you're looking at is too good to be true or se little suspicious. Exercising just a little extra caution could help keep you from getting infected."

Top 10 cities in the UK with the most infections per capita, along with how much higher their infection rate compared to the national average:

1. Manchester 820% higher than the national average

2. Sheffield 363% higher than the national average

3. London 289% higher than the national average

4. Derby 243% higher than the national average

5. Southampton 146% higher than the national average

6. Liverpool 123% higher than the national average

7. Nottingham 75% higher than the national average

8. York 69% higher than the national average

9. Leicester 63% higher than the national average

10. Northampton 41% higher than the national average

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