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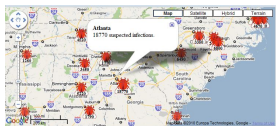
By Tony Bradley, PCWorld | JUL 6, 2010 11:57 AM PT

NEWS

Atlanta Has Dubious Honor of Highest Malware Infection Rate



New York and Los Angeles are major metropolitan areas with exponentially larger populations than most other US cities, so they lead the way for total [volume of malware infections](#). If you break the infection rate down per capita based on population, though, Atlanta comes out on top (or is it on the bottom?) of the heap with the highest malware infection rate.



Enigma Software Group maintains a real-time [map displaying the infection rate](#) in cities across the United States. If you are looking to establish or relocate a business, perhaps you should consult the map first to avoid regions that seem more prone to malware infection.

"Malware makers are becoming more and more sophisticated, and the risk they pose to your computer and your valuable personal information is growing," says Enigma Software Group CEO Alvin Estevez. "We think it's important to keep an eye on where the malware is doing the most damage and our Malware Tracker map helps us and consumers know what's going on."

[[Further reading: How to remove malware from your Windows PC](#)]

The Enigma Software Group map shows [overall malware infection rates](#), but also allows you to drill down by specific malware threats--displaying results specific to the top 10 current malware threats. According to a statement from Enigma, it "recently pulled a 30-day history of infections in the 100 largest cities in the United States. Not surprisingly, New York City had the most infections--because New York has the most computers. But when the number of infections was factored in as a percentage of a city's population, New York ended up near the bottom of the list and Atlanta, Georgia came out on top."

Birmingham AL, Denver CO, Chesapeake VA, and Madison WI round out the top five worst cities. On the other end of the spectrum, Jersey City, NJ has the lowest per capita malware infection rate, followed by Santa Ana CA, Detroit MI, Boise ID, and Memphis TN.

So, is there something special about Jersey City, NJ that makes it impervious to malware attack? Is there something insidious about Atlanta, GA that [invites malicious software infections](#)? Or is it purely random chance?

I asked Estevez for additional insight related to these findings, and he responded to say "It's impossible for us to guess why any particular city is at the top or bottom of the list at any given time. But one thing we DO know is that any time you have a city with high Internet connectivity and a large population of younger people, the internet traffic is higher and so is the risk for malware infections. Atlanta is a well-connected and relatively young city (the average age of its citizens is five years less than the national average)."

Perhaps areas with greater Internet connectivity and younger populations are also more involved in the world, and more likely to respond to scams and malware [attacks exploiting natural disasters](#) and other global catastrophes to steal identities and compromise PCs.

Based on that analysis, it seems that there is no need to choose a city, or shy away from a given region based on the malware infection rates. However, analyzing the malware infection rate for your area may indicate an increased need to [improve malware defenses](#) and provide additional security awareness training for users to protect company computers and network resources from suffering the same fate as the rest of the area if your business is located in a region with a notably high per capita malware infection rate.

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