

This Is the Most Malware-Infested City in America



Claire Nowak

Where you live could be putting your cyber security at risk.



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Cybersecurity has never been more important, especially considering the data breaches we hear more and more about in the news. Hackers can attack your computer and digital information by using malware, short for malicious software. These programs can infiltrate your computer without your consent, and they include

everything from viruses that corrupt your data before spreading to other computers to spyware that can steal your money or identity. Unfortunately, if you live in one Southern city, you need to take extra precautions against these cyber threats.

Atlanta, Georgia, is the city with the highest malware infection rate in the country, according to EnigmaSoft (<https://www.enigmasoftware.com/atlanta-orlando-denver-highest-malware-infection-rates-major-cities-us-first-half-2018/>). Researchers at the company, which produces the SpyHunter 5 anti-malware software, compiled data from SpyHunter over the first six months of 2018 to identify which American cities are most affected by malware. According to a press release, the infections SpyHunter detected ranged from “nuisanceware” that simply slowed down computers to ransomware that threatens to delete files unless the user pays a ransom. Here are [20 more cybersecurity secrets hackers don't want you to know](https://www.rd.com/advice/work-career/internet-hacker-tricks/) (<https://www.rd.com/advice/work-career/internet-hacker-tricks/>).

Atlanta's malware infection rate was more than 1,000 percent higher than the national average. Next on the list were Orlando, Florida, and Denver, Colorado, (both with infection rates greater than 900 percent above average), followed by St. Louis, Missouri, and Tampa, Florida.

“It's hard to say exactly why one city or state has a higher rate of infection than others,” EnigmaSoft spokesperson Ryan Gerding said in the press release. “There's a wide variety at the top of the list. Larger cities, smaller cities, and cities in every geographic area. The same is true for the least infected areas. New York and San Francisco ranked near the very bottom of the list.”

EnigmaSoft also identified the states with the highest malware infection rates. The top five, starting with the most infected, are Colorado, New Hampshire, Virginia, New Jersey, and Oregon.

To protect your devices from malware, regularly backup your data, either onto an external drive or the cloud, make sure your computer automatically installs operating system updates, and look out for suspicious emails or messages on social media. If you live in one of the most infected cities or states, you may want to

consider installing anti-malware programs. Regardless of hometown, everyone should know these [10 ways to protect yourself online and avoid scams](https://www.rd.com/advice/saving-money/10-ways-to-protect-yourself-online/) (<https://www.rd.com/advice/saving-money/10-ways-to-protect-yourself-online/>).

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