Ransomware

Ransomware is a particularly insidious form of technical blackmail much favoured by cyber criminals.

A ransomware attack starts with a form of virus infecting your device (excluding iPhones and iPads) and encrypting all of your data (documents, spreadsheets, contact lists, photos and more). The criminal behind the attack then demands money in return for which he or she will supply a decryption key to enable you to recover your data.

Our official advice is not to pay any money to any criminals (even if you do, there is no guarantee that the decryption key will be delivered).

If you have not yet done so, now is the time to take some simple steps to enable you to recover from a ransomware attack quickly and without cost (other than a bit of your time).

If any or all of your data is lost (from ransomware or any other cause) you will be able to recover a very recent copy provided you have a robust backup scheme in place.

A full description of the best practice backup is in the related paper; the summary is simple: a best practice backup is: stored off-site, run automatically, maintains multiple copies (versions).

Best, however, is to take the steps appropriate to preventing a ransomware attack from happening.

Most attacks stem from someone in your organisation (or you if you are an individual) following a link in a spoof email (also called a phishing email and covered in detail in the related paper 'Scams').

It is vital that all computer users understand the dangers of following links in unexpected emails or those whose credibility cannot be verified.

If in doubt, don't - always think before you link!

If you are unlucky enough to be the victim of ransomware, the first thing to do is disconnect yourself from the Internet; then use a separate device to search for instructions on how to remove the infection that has caused the attack. Once this has been completed you can reconnect to the Internet and restore from your backup.

For more Police advice on Ransomware tap [here](#).

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In an emergency always dial 999