

Security Awareness: Start with a Strong Base Layer

By Doug Westervelt

Ransomware is a word that keeps business owners and IT professionals up late at nights worrying about their defense against a business-disrupting nightmare. According to a [PhishMe](#) study performed in Q3 2016, more than 97% of phishing email attacks contained a form of ransomware in the payload.

A recent [Intermedia report](#) found that 72 percent of affected companies were unable to access their data for at least two days and 32 percent were down for at least a week. Kaspersky Labs reported that 1 in 5 companies *never* got their data back.

Like a good base layer in cold weather, some basic preparation goes a long way to improve the effectiveness of every additional measure added on top. We recommend every company start out by informing and educating your employees about the risks and attributes of phishing attacks.

Last year's Verizon [Data Breach Investigations Report](#) showed that 30 percent of phishing emails are opened by recipients and 12 percent of the readers clicked on the malicious payload. Some quick math shows that nearly 4% of all phishing emails sent to an organization will result in a really bad day. If users can be trained to identify phishing attacks and send them to the trash, or to promptly report when they've fallen victim, the risks and impact of ransomware can be reduced or eliminated.

Portland Internetworks now offers a Security Awareness service which includes phishing simulations to identify users who are prone to clicking links they shouldn't (baseline testing), educational videos for those who fall into the trap (training), ongoing phishing simulations (trending), as well as special tests such as "vishing" (the use of phone calls for social engineering purposes) and "dropped USB drives". We even include a Crypto-Ransom Guarantee worth up to \$1,000 in Bitcoin if your company falls victim even after performing the tests and training and paying the ransom is your last option.

If ransomware is keeping you up at night, [get in touch](#). For as low as \$1 per employee per month, we can help you build your human firewall.