



cornerstone

## Cryptolocker

One of the nastiest types of virus in the world these days is called “ransomware” – a virus that silently infects one computer on the network and, quietly in the background, starts encrypting all of your user files so you can’t access them. After a certain period of time, the ransomware virus will display a message telling you your files are encrypted and the only way to get the key to decrypt them is to pay a ransom (amounts vary widely) to a mostly untraceable electronic address out of the country.

Most ransomware infections arrive in the form of an email attachment – usually a “spoofed” email, which looks like a legitimate email from a third party. The most common spoofed email we’ve seen purports to be from UPS or FedEx claiming that there’s a problem with your account or a recent shipment, and asking you to run the attached file to get details. These spoofed emails use the logos and graphics from the real companies, and can be difficult to tell from real email from the company. Some virus variations use the address book on an infected system to mail themselves to everyone the infected computer knows, so you may receive an odd email from someone you’ve previously gotten email from asking you to look at an attachment. The best way to avoid infections is to not run any programs attached to an email – make sure the attachment is only a PDF or an image file before you click on it, and if you’re not sure, call Cornerstone to double check.

There is no way to decrypt the files without the key, and while there have been some highly publicized examples of businesses paying exorbitant ransoms to get access to their files again, there is no guarantee that paying will get you your files back. The best way to combat this attack is to remove the infected workstation from the network and restore your files from backup. A complete daily local backup is indispensable in securing your data, and a secondary cloud backup of vital files is a good second line of defense.

Cornerstone is happy to check your backup at any time, and discuss more options to help safeguard your data against this new and growing threat. Please contact our office for more information or to schedule a free assessment from one of our technicians.