

Technology In Our Lives

Cyber Criminals Offer Free Movies, Make You Pay Later

(NAPSA)—The average American household now has nine Internet-enabled devices to connect to the Internet, watch movies or television shows, or “smarten” the thermostats, doorbells or nanny cams. These products let people save energy, buy groceries, connect with family members and access a seemingly limitless catalog of entertainment.

It's important, however, to realize that some devices may not be as secure as others. For example, millions of rogue entertainment boxes are now in homes. While these devices look like an Apple TV or Roku box, they are unsecured and can expose consumers to malware. Typically, they are used to illegally access pirated movies, TV shows or live events.

The Digital Citizens Alliance (DCA) investigated apps on these devices and found malware on them that stole researchers' user names and passwords, probed user networks and surreptitiously uploaded user data without consent. Most consumers are unaware of the security risks that can occur when plugging one of these devices into a home network, and if they did know, they would be much less likely to allow them in their home.

Recently, the Federal Trade Commission warned consumers about these devices: “If you want to avoid downloading malware when you stream video, don't watch pirated content. Period. Not online and not through a video streaming device.”

For years, hackers have used pirated content as a lure to expose consumers



Don't let pirates into your premises: To protect your cyber devices, avoid rogue entertainment equipment that illegally accesses TV shows and movies.

to malware. “Criminals use trickery to enter into consumers' homes,” said Tom Galvin, executive director of DCA. “The enticement of free movies and television shows on products without a reputable company behind them creates a fertile ground for malware to spread. If it is too good to be true, it probably is.”

Keeping an eye on the devices that are brought into your home, including by your children, is critical to your cyber safety. Consumers who stream pirated content are six times more likely to report an issue with malware than those who don't use piracy devices.

The lure of free pirated content can be tempting, but there is a hidden price to be paid.