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# Porn and the snowbound workforce

Seems all those bored employees stuck at home during this week's "snowpocalypse" led to a huge surge of P.C. infections from malware and spyware tied to randy users visiting pornography websites. Hope that's not a company-provided laptop, buster.



By **Thornton McEnery**



City and state officials may have breathed public sighs of relief after the Blizzard That Wasn't spared the Big Apple, but millions of bored New Yorkers stuck at home Monday and Tuesday with readily available Internet and curious minds allowed for an entirely different threat to emerge.

According to data compiled by anti-virus program developer [Enigma Software](#), there was a blizzard of hacker activity in New York City during the snowstorm, with reports of infections from spyware and malware almost doubling their normal rates. Infection reports from 20,000 Enigma customers in the five boroughs showed a 98% spike, compared with what was reported over the previous 30 days. But while foul weather might look like the primary cause of increased exposure to hackers, the real danger emerges from the behaviors of people stuck inside for long periods of time.

The phenomenon of storms leading to increased software security violations is not rare, said Patrick Morganelli, Enigma's senior vice president of technology. "Any time there is a major weather event that keeps more people indoors and online, we see a spike in Internet traffic and a spike in infections," he said.

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Mr. Morganelli said that last year's blizzard, which buried Buffalo under six feet of snow, led to a 60% spike in hacker-caused infections, mostly for one arousing reason. "We're not saying that everyone stuck indoors is going online to adult sites," Mr. Morganelli said. "But that kind of activity definitely causes the bulk of the infections we find."

According to Mr. Morganelli, increased levels of malware infections go almost hand-in-hand with increased traffic to porn sites. Adult-content platform Pornhub reported a 21% increase in traffic from New York City-based users during this week's storm, paralleling what Mr. Morganelli and his colleagues saw from a security standpoint earlier in the week.

For randier New Yorkers who might have been home with work-provided laptops, the blizzard malware infections could cause more than just an uncomfortable chat with human resources.

"If you're connected to your company's servers and doing something you shouldn't ... wow," he said. "That could cause major repercussions in their corporate network, and that's very bad."

And if these data weren't enough to make New Yorkers blush with embarrassment, it should be noted that in Boston—where the storm hit hardest—Enigma saw only a 60% increase in infections during the snow days.

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