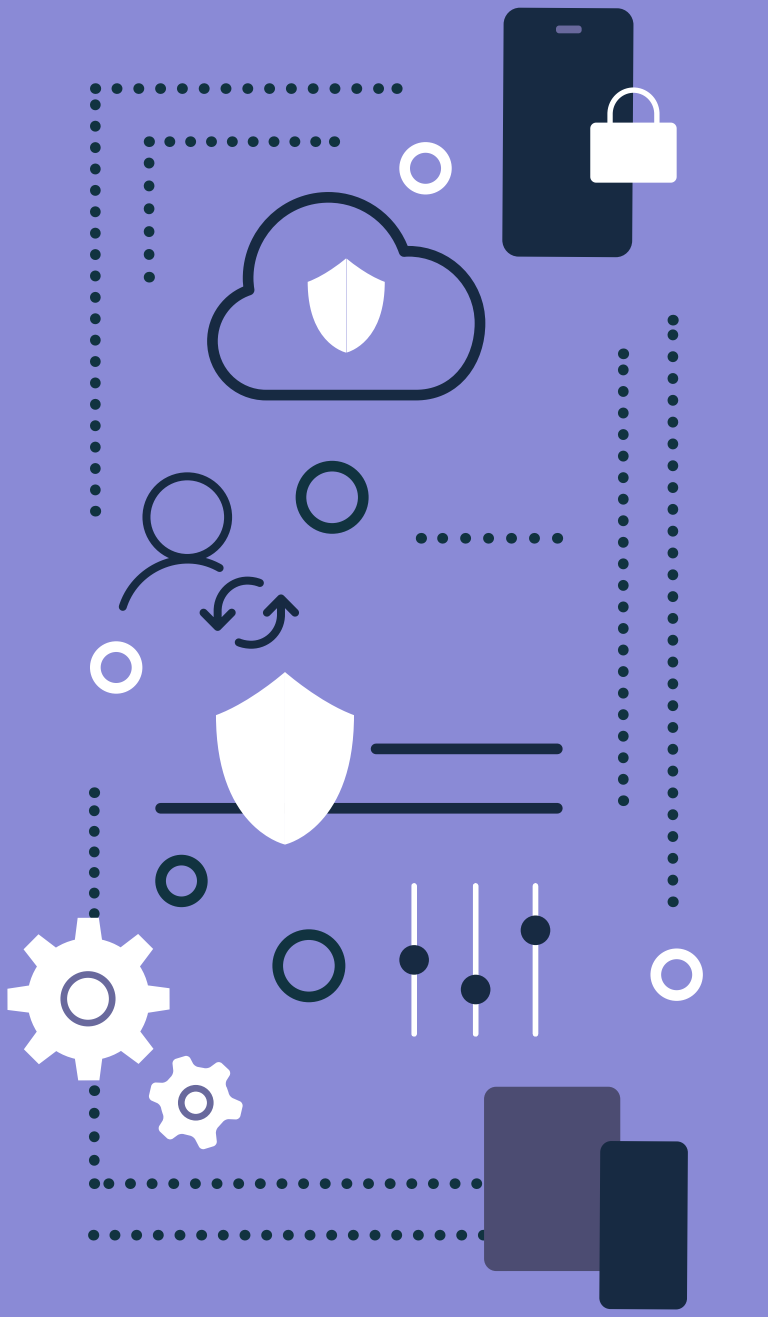


jamf

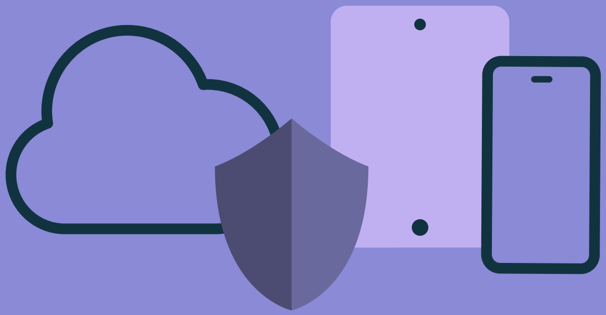
Essential Guide to

Antivirus for Mac

MAC-FOCUSED MALWARE IS ESSENTIAL AS ENTERPRISES CONTINUE EXPANDING THEIR APPLE FLEET.

Overall, Apple fares well considering that detections are on the rise across all computing platforms, while malware-specific detections appear to be in a lull compared to other, more targeted malware threat types.

As organizations have adopted remote and hybrid workforces, the technology landscape has drastically changed. In response, malware authors and threat actors are adapting to these changes by modifying the scope and scale of the malware tools in their arsenal. By leveraging multiple threat types at once, attackers add complexity while increased reliance on automation allows targets to expand to include the collaboration tools that users are relying on to stay productive.



IN THIS GUIDE, WE'LL DISCUSS THE FOLLOWING:

- Define Mac-focused antivirus (AV)
- Highlight how malware threats are increasingly affecting Mac users
- Explain why understanding these trends is so vital to securing private data and...
- ...Share what Jamf offers to ensure your Mac devices stay protected

MAC-FOCUSED ANTIVIRUS

AV is a basic requirement for most organizational devices to provide baseline security. Apple includes a basic AV mechanism in macOS with XProtect, Gatekeeper and MRT. However, these tools are updated sporadically and organizations lack visibility into their actions. Organizations need more sophisticated AV capabilities to prevent and quarantine Mac malware and goes far beyond what Windows-focused solutions are able to provide on macOS.
And they shouldn't wait until malware, adware or other unwanted software issues arise.

They need to implement AV that effectively identifies and remediates Mac-specific attacks without spending precious resources looking for threats to Windows on a Mac. Effective, efficient and comprehensive Mac AV capabilities are essential to both security and device experience.

Examples like relaying GPS coordinates, decrypted message logging and monitoring/ recording phone calls are but a few of the many privacy concerns being violated, according to a report by Kaspersky Labs.

A CHANGING THREAT LANDSCAPE

There has been a marked increase in phishing campaigns that take advantage of contemporary crises, feeding off the fears and concerns of individuals, particularly when it pertains to goods that have been in limited supply or affected by global shortages, including tech support scams.

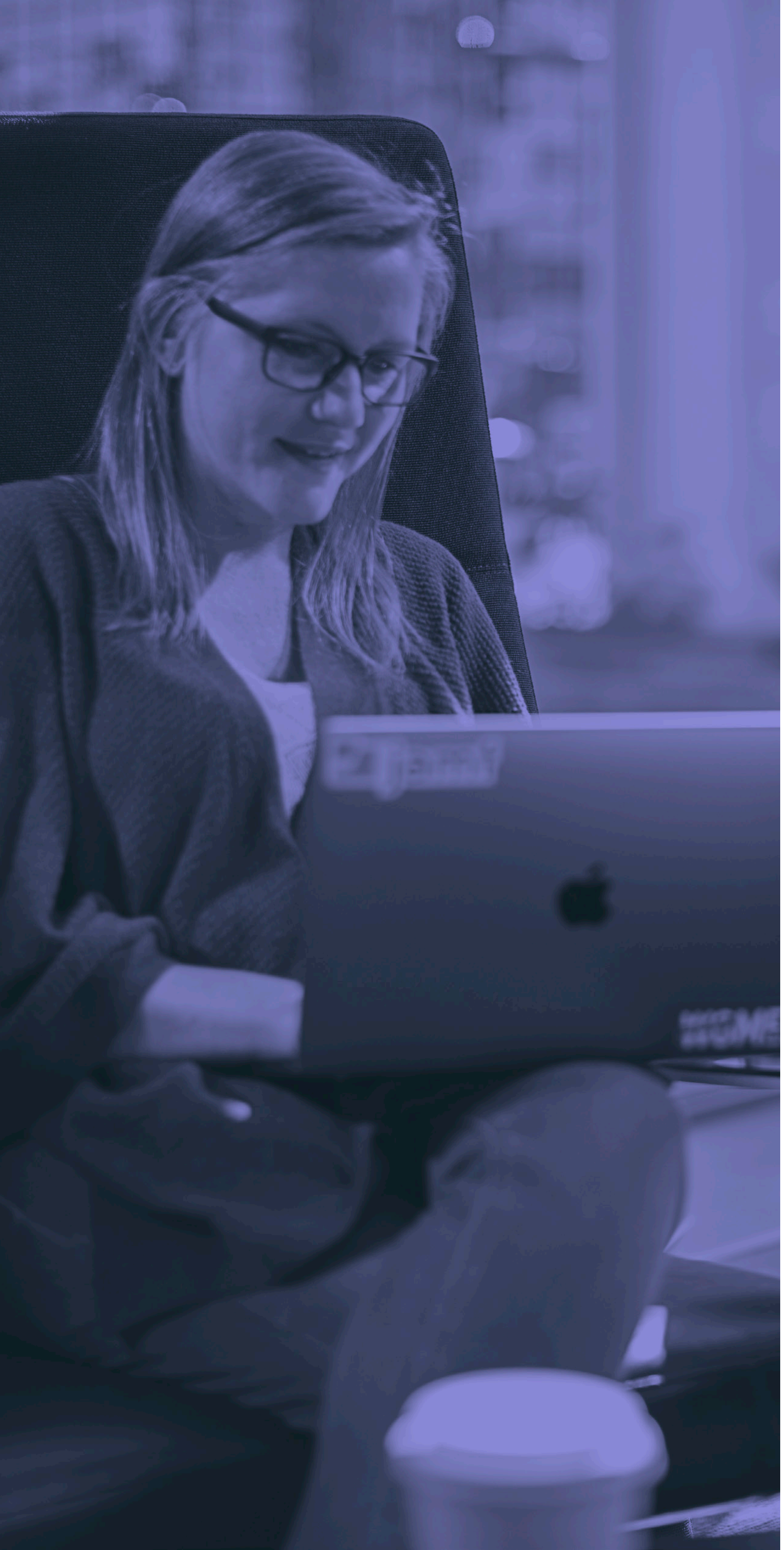
ONLINE CREEPING

Adware, spyware stalkerware are all types of malware used to obtain and exfiltrate data about computer users. The latter, stalkerware earned the nickname “online creeping” because it leverages all kinds of personally identifying data in real time.

IT'S CHESS, NOT CHECKERS

When reviewing this information, it's important to note that threat actors often play the long game, meaning that attack campaigns can last as long as they need to succeed. They are not limited to getting a single piece of malware onto a device but may keep trying to gain access and leverage any existing footholds. This allows for time to be on their side to make any changes necessary in their attack strategy or tools, gather as much intel as they would like and ultimately allow any malware to embed itself more deeply into the affected systems.

It's cyclical with each facet directly impacting and feeding the next.



STATE OF ANTIVIRUS FOR MAC

Malware growth continues its upward trend in general, with 1,227,048,144 total malware identified — including potentially unwanted applications (PUA) — in 2022 by AV-Test.org. The silver lining for Mac users? Distribution by OS found that only 220 of the overall malware were identified as targeted macOS!

Several factors affect this sea change, including:

- Apple’s continued market growth in the business world
- Consumers choosing Apple products from employee-choice programs (or simply bringing their own)
- The global shift towards remote and hybrid work/work-from-home programs has expanded the demarcation line that used to divide the office and home

DON'T BREAK OUT THE PARTY HATS JUST YET!

While consumer users may see this downtick as a cause to celebrate, telemetry data collected from various sources indicate that devices used in the personal space are still subject to potentially unwanted programs (PUPs) with adware leading the charge.

This represents a different issue altogether than what is being seen on the business side, but for personal users of Mac products, PUPs and adware represent an attempt to target user's personally identifiable information (PII) — or a setup to something far worse down the road — when malicious ads are delivered, private data is tracked or a sketchy app that claims it will clean your Mac is downloaded.

MIX-AND-MATCH MALWARE

While the last known novel ransomware targeting Mac was detected several years back, 2020 brought EvilQuest to the forefront (also known as ThiefQuest). This piece of malware has all the makings of ransomware except the encryption warnings and asking for payment to decrypt files is merely subterfuge to mask its true intention: persistent and targeted theft of personal and business data.

Malware such as this can evolve over time — just like regular software — to include additional features that cause more harm while also increasing stealth to evade detection. It can even update itself to evolve after it has infected a device. EvilQuest has all the markings of being an ongoing story to watch for as it changes in the future.

OLD DOGS CAN LEARN NEW TRICKS.

Filed under the “annoying for now” category, adware-type malware is evolving as well. Given Apple’s newer macOS releases that work to verify app signing before allowing apps to launch, some malware authors have gone to great lengths to think out of the box in order to gain access to the precious data on your system and to monetize the ads you see when browsing the web.

Examples of these attack types can be: duplicating the Safari app itself, modifying it and installing unauthorized extensions to track users; using configuration profiles — the same kind that are used by IT admins to manage device settings — to trick users into installing them on their devices; and effectively grant threat actors the types of access they need to carry out more attacks.

It should also be noted that while adware is considered less dangerous, the combination of it being the most common malware threat among macOS while also showing the most advanced forms of innovation in how to infect systems — not to mention combined with the increasingly common ability to remotely add new malware payloads can amplify its impact.

WORK SMARTER NOT HARDER

Unfortunately, there is no one solution that will resolve the escalating threats currently being faced. One of the key takeaways is that threats will not come from the same place each time. Threat actors are increasingly varying their tactics and target devices and services that will yield the greatest results. One thing that the data asserts is that attackers are showing no signs of stopping.

What does this mean for everyone that relies on computers to live and work? In simple terms, security must be set up to defend, deflect, prevent or remediate any and all threats that come its way. Vigilance is an important part of the security equation, whether it stems from training users on how to spot common threat types, like phishing attempts, or not installing unknown software.

IT and security teams must also incorporate vigilant practices into their workflows to strengthen and uphold the security posture of the organization at all times. Reliance on detection software to locate threats based on known signatures or heuristics, which performs behavioral analytics to detect unknown threats before they happen, provides the insights necessary to understand not only where threats targeting their organization are coming from but also how to protect against them.

Quick response and automation work hand in glove to respond quickly to detected threats while also remediating any issues found is essential for success. Both help to minimize the attack surface and better manage risk efficiently while adding another layer to the defense-in-depth strategy.

After all, when we use Mac, it’s to get something done — probably not to scan through thousands of lines of application code looking for bugs in an app before we launch it, right? It’s in these moments that we remember that Apple strives to make its user experience exceptionally easy to navigate so Apple users can create something extraordinary. So, why shouldn’t security software follow those same guidelines?

JAMF INTEGRATION + SUPPORT

Jamf Protect prevents malware and remediates malicious behavior through signature-based detection and behavioral analytics on Mac. With top-down, granular insight into devices company IT and security departments can see what's affecting device performance from a security purview. Furthermore, when joined with Jamf Pro, centralized patch management and remediation are enabled to allow resolution of just about any issue that may arise. Lastly, Jamf Connect completes this highly secure trifecta. Jamf connect's solution for identity and access management uses cloud-based identity services for secure device and resource access.

A defense with an in-depth strategy that includes Apple's built-in tools and expands on them with the combined power of Jamf, will help you maintain effective Mac security that seamlessly integrates with the end-user experience while still providing all the relevant insight and analytics about their devices. This layered strategy allows IT to make the best decision where the protection of their devices and safeguarding of user's data is concerned.

Jamf — the standard in Apple Enterprise Management — has the products and solutions that will help you enact the best security strategy for your organization and your users.

We call it Trusted Access.
Learn more about it.

DON'T JUST TAKE OUR WORD FOR IT,

put AV and endpoint protection to the test.

When you're ready to protect your Mac fleet against escalating security threats, known malware in the wild and to remediate malicious behavior, try us out for free or contact your preferred reseller.

Request a free trial

or contact your preferred Apple reseller when you're ready to harden your security.

Learn more about Jamf Protect and Mac endpoint protection on jamf.com