News release

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Combating Cybercriminality: Understanding Human and Technical Drivers

Prepared by BayHfoeD in cooperation with Evangelos Markatos and Alexey Kirichenko on behalf of the CC-DRIVER consortium

Thirteen partners from across the EU have joined forces in the €5 million, EU-funded CC-DRIVER project to examine the human and technical drivers behind cybercriminality and to design new methods to prevent, investigate and mitigate cybercriminal behaviour.

The project is particularly focused on Cybercrime-as-a-Service (CaaS), an organised business model for "hiring" cybercriminals to perform illegal services or for acquiring tools, information and expertise facilitating cybercriminal operations. Such illegal services include hacking an account, attacking a competitor, and laundering money, while malware, botnets and information about security weaknesses are examples of the tools and resources that can be acquired via CaaS. CC-DRIVER has just released a report on CaaS in Europe.

Cybercrime-as-a-Service is a key business model driving cybercrime: A new generation of aspiring (cyber-)criminals can sell resources facilitating cybercrime and do not have to commit the key crimes themselves, reducing their risks and increasing their profits. On the other hand, criminals without technical skills can buy illegal cyber operations by experienced hackers.

The new CC-DRIVER report "Landscape study of Cybercrime-as-a-Service" focuses on a wide range of criminal activities being offered in Cybercrime-as-a-Service, such as cryptocurrency laundering and tumbling, bulletproof hosting, Hacking-as-a-Service, Distributed-Denial-of-Service (DDoS) attacks, Spamming, and Social boosters. It also reviews current trends in the cybercrime landscape, such as service models, communication methods, and monetisation.

"Cybercrime-as-a-Service has led to the era of industrialisation for cybercrime", says report co-author Evangelos Markatos, Professor of Computer Science and head of the Distributed Computing Systems and Cybersecurity lab at FORTH-ICS. "Cybercrime is a growing business with new actors and groups entering the field, new marketplaces spawning in the darknet to replace old ones and making it hard to detect these activities, and new services and products emerging to counter new defences. Whether it is Ransomware-as-a-Service, DDoS-attacks-as-a-Service, Cryptocurrency tumbling or any other service, one thing is clear: Cybercrime-as-a-Service is a reality today and it will continue to proliferate as long as there is a demand for it."

The full report "Landscape study of Cybercrime-as-a-Service" can be downloaded free of charge at https://www.ccdriver-h2020.com/deliverables.

The CC-DRIVER consortium

The project is co-ordinated by David Wright, Trilateral Research (UK). Other consortium partners include F-Secure (Finland), FORTH (Greece), Simavi (Romania), the Valencia Local Police (Spain), Policia Judiciária (Portugal), the School of Criminal Science at the University of Lausanne (Switzerland), KEMEA (Greece), the Department of Policing at the University of Applied Sciences for Public Service in Bavaria (Germany), the University of East London (UK), the Information Security Forum (UK), PrivaNova (France) and the Hellenic Police (Greece).

More information can be found at https://www.ccdriver-h2020.com/consortium.

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The CC-DRIVER project – Understanding the drivers of cybercriminality, and new methods to prevent, investigate and mitigate cybercriminal behaviour – has received grant agreement No 883543 under the European Union's H2020 research and innovation programme.