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SHOULD I GET PERSONAL CYBER THEFT INSURANCE?

TECH TIPS

By Joe Awe, President, TechBldrs, Inc.



As the pandemic era necessitated work shifting into the remote and digital sphere, chances are you've become increasingly aware of the threat of cyberattacks. And even as you've become smarter and more cautious about which emails you open and which links you click, the cyber criminals too have become increasingly cunning in their schemes.

In response to this rising risk, you may have looked into Personal Cyber Theft Insurance. You wouldn't be alone. According to business strategy group Accenture, in a poll of 47,000 consumers worldwide, 54 percent of consumers said they'd be interested in home cybersecurity insurance with premiums that are tied to the use of the latest anti-virus protection software.

So, what exactly are we so worried about that 54 percent of consumers are looking for cyber insurance?

STATS ON AND TYPES OF CYBERATTACKS

The term Cyberattack is a broad category that includes the following cyber threats: cyber extortion (ransomware attacks), sending viruses, identity theft, data breaches, fraud, and cyberbullying.

Cyber Extortion is a relatively new and increasingly damaging trend. It's a lot like regular extortion, but it occurs via a cyber-attack. A cyber attacker might hack into your data and hold pieces of it hostage until you pay what they want. These payments occur in Cryptocurrencies. The anonymity of crypto exchange allows for anonymity for the cyber extortionist.

One big problem is the inflation and scarcity of certain cryptocurrencies, like Bitcoin, means simply gathering enough of the currency to pay off the ransom is difficult. Even if you do have access to this amount of cryptocurrency, paying the extortion fees is not recommended by the FBI, as there's no way to know if you'll actually get your data back, or if you'll only get another request for compensation.

The FBI cited that more than 4,000 ransomware attacks have occurred every day in the US since 2016. That's a 300 percent increase since 2015, which averaged 1,000 ransomware attacks per day.

The method of cyberattack most are familiar with is your online payment method being compromised, and your credit card bill being fraudulently run up.

But cyberattacks have gone well beyond this space in causing you financial trauma.

A recent report by the White House Council of Economic Advisers reported that the FBI's Internet Crime Complaint Center received almost 300,000 individual complaints of cybercrimes, with a total estimated cost of \$1.3 billion in 2016. That comes out to an average cost of over \$4,000 per cybercrime.

This hasn't gone unnoticed by the consumer sector. According to a 2019 survey by Verisk, a data analytics company, nearly two-thirds of consumers are worried about a cyberattack and almost one-third have already experienced an attack.

HOW CAN PERSONAL CYBER INSURANCE HELP?

Personal cyber insurance functions just like any other personal insurance policy. If you are the victim of a cyberattack, you file a claim to mitigate the expenses. These cyberattack insurance policies may cover cyberattack, cyber bullying, cyber extortion, data breach, and online fraud.

In response to the aforementioned statistics and consumer desire, major insurance companies are starting to add Personal Cyber Insurance as an add-on to their preexisting policy. For example, homeowners insured by State Farm can now add Personal Cyber Insurance to their home insurance policy.

Here is an example from Chubb of a potential Personal Cyber Insurance Policy:

<https://www.chubb.com/au-en/individuals-families/products/master-piece/cyber-insurance.html>

If you decide you're interested in Personal Cyber Insurance, you should check with your pre-existing insurance companies — start with your home insurance company — to see if they've added a Personal Cyber Insurance Policy. More and more of your traditional home insurance companies are creating Personal Cyber Insurance options in response to the rise in cyber-attacks.

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TRICOUNTY AREA CHAMBER ANNUAL DINNER

KEYNOTE SPEAKER

U.S. OLYMPIAN

JOHNNY QUINN

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TECH TIPS

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Before looking into Personal Cyber Insurance, ensure that you have done everything in your own power to strengthen your defense against cyber-attacks. These traditional measures include antivirus software, credit-monitoring services and identity theft insurance.

However, with the drastic increase in remote work, and cyber criminals only becoming more advanced, traditional measures have their limits. Depending on your own personal relationship to cyberspace, you should certainly educate yourself on Personal Cyber Insurance.

Upcoming Trends

If you're not ready to pull the trigger on Personal Cyber Insurance right this instant, keep your eyes and ears open as the industry grows. Insurance is a reflection of the threats in society, and personal cyber damage is a trend with seemingly exponential growth possibility. That means the personal cyber insurance field will adapt and grow with the threat.

You can count on more and more of the traditional home insurance companies offering Personal Cyber Insurance policies. Beyond that, you'll see more insurance entities spring up purely dedicated to

Personal Cyber Insurance policy. If there's not an option that makes sense to you now, there very well may be in the future. It's your personal responsibility to keep up with both the threats and your cyber insurance options as the field evolves.

As Personal Cyber Insurance becomes more prevalent, the payouts to cyber-criminals practicing cyber extortion will rise. These fulfilled ransoms will only encourage more cyber extortion, creating a vicious cycle of Cyber Extortion, Insurance Payments, and most of all, YOUR compromised data.

Whether you have personal cyber insurance or not, your vigilance in protecting your cyber presence should trend in the same direction as this threat — as the threat grows exponentially, your vigilance must too! Personal Cyber Insurance may provide a safety net, but the best possible result is never encountering any of the aforementioned cyber-attacks. There's no bulletproof way to protect yourself, but there are steps you can and should take to mitigate the risk.

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