

Hacker seeking bitcoin ransom hits Spanish city's computer system

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Holding a city's computer system hostage

A hacker has taken over the computer system of the southern Spanish city of Jerez de la Frontera and is demanding a ransom paid in bitcoin to unlock it, local officials said Friday.

The cyber attack, which has caused outages of services offered through the city's website, began on Tuesday night, a municipal spokesman told AFP.

The hacker behind the attack is demanding a payment in bitcoin to restore the [computer system](#), he added, without saying how much is being asked for.

Bitcoin and other cryptocurrencies have long been a favourite ransom tender for cyber criminals thanks to the currencies' anonymous nature.

Spain's interior ministry has sent three [computer experts](#) to Jerez de la Frontera, a city of some 212,000 residents which is the home of sherry, to help the municipality resolve the [cyber attack](#), the city's authorities said in a statement.

Its Socialist mayor, Mamem Sanchez, said the municipal website would only be back up and running when it is "100 percent secure".

While law enforcement and [security experts](#) say it is unwise to pay hackers, many organisations end up accepting ransom demands which often cost less than rebuilding computer systems.

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