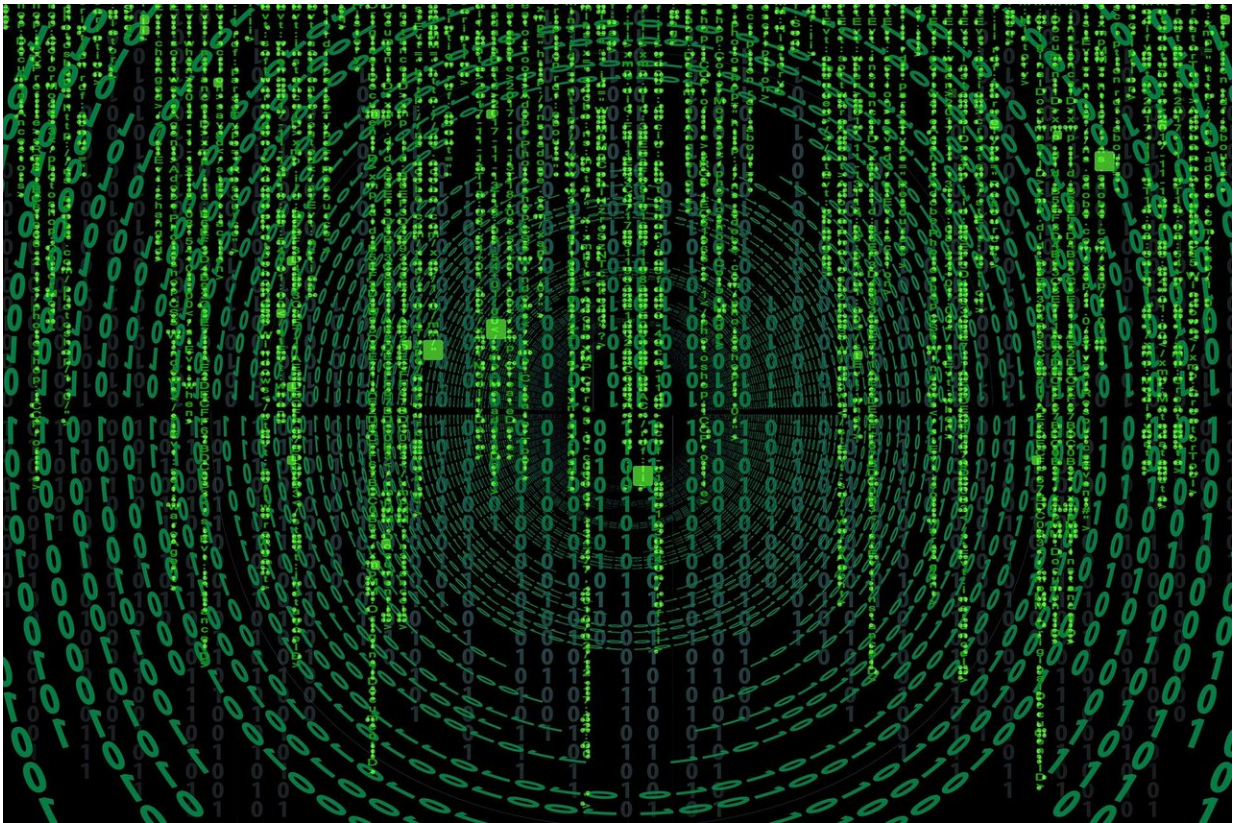


# Mac software threats climbed 400% in 2019, more than Microsoft Windows, report says

February 14 2020, by Edward C. Baig

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Mac computers are less secure than they used to be and more vulnerable to certain types of software threats than their Microsoft Windows counterparts.

That's the assertion from a newly issued report on [malware](#) from cybersecurity company Malwarebytes. The report contradicts a long-held belief that Macs are more immune to such threats than Windows PCs.

Malwarebytes conceded most of the Mac threats were not considered as malicious or dangerous as traditional malware. It detected only a single incident—targeting Coinbase and other cryptocurrency companies—that involved anything beyond tricking the user into downloading and opening something they shouldn't.

"What we saw was a virtual landslide of adware and PUP (potentially unwanted programs) detections, far outpacing growth on the Windows side," the report said. "While these threats are not considered as dangerous as traditional malware, they are becoming a much larger and more noticeable nuisance for Mac users, who can no longer say that their beloved systems are immune from malware."

Threats to the Mac climbed 400% last year compared to 2018, though some allowance was made for the fact that there was a corresponding increase in the number of Macs running Malwarebytes software.

But the authors added that "Mac detections per endpoint" increased from 4.8 in 2018 to a whopping 11.0 in 2019, nearly double the same statistic for Windows.

For the first time, Mac threats appeared at the top of Malwarebytes' overall threat detections list, the report said.

Apple pointed U.S. TODAY to documentation posted in late November, spelling out its position on "suspicious" software for developers, warning against programs deemed deceptive, difficult or costly to remove, or that degraded a user's privacy or security.

When developers join the Apple Developer Program and accept the Program License Agreement, the tech giant says they agree to "ensure that their software is safe and secure for their users."

"They also agree to cooperate with Apple systems ... designed to help protect users from malware (e.g., viruses, trojan horses, backdoors, ransomware, spyware) or malicious, suspicious, or harmful code or components when distributing Developer ID—signed Mac software outside the Mac App Store," Apple said.

Either way, Mac owners shouldn't have any false sense of security.

Apple has always counseled Mac customers to update to the latest version of macOS software, and to download [software](#) only from the Mac App Store or other trusted sources.

Two type of Mac threats—NewTab and PCVARK—placed second and third Malwarebyte's list of the most prevalent detections across all platforms.

By increasing market share, Macs may have become more attractive to cybercriminals, the report suggests. It went on to state that "macOS' built-in security systems have not cracked down on adware and PUPs to the same degree that they have malware, leaving the door open for these borderline programs to infiltrate."

The NewTab [threat](#), for example, is adware often hidden in fake map, fake flight or fake package tracking pages. It redirects your browser to a place where the cyber-attacker may be able to illicitly make money.

iPhones might not be immune from malware.

Malwarebytes said that iOS malware exists as well, typically from

"nation-states." But it adds, there is no way "to scan for it."

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