The 12 Days of Encriptmas
By Mike Sheward

Let's face it; in the world of the cyber criminal, finding the perfect gift for your true love isn't always at the top of your priority list. However, everyone has a soft side, even those who cost UK businesses an average of £3 million a year as a direct result of their malicious activities.

Lets take a look at this years most popular gifts on the cyber black market.

On the first day of Christmas, my 'cyber crim' true love gave to me…
A zero day exploit.

A zero-day exploit is code that exploits a previously unknown vulnerability in a software product. Security researchers report these to vendors to give them the ability to patch the bugs, whereas malicious folks can use them to compromise machines.

And these don't come cheap. Depending on the target application, a zero day can go for hundreds of thousands of pounds on the black market. Vulnerabilities in mobile operating systems are reportedly the most costly, closely followed by browsers and productivity tools.

And its not just criminals who are in the business of buying zero-days, government agencies also have an interest.

On the second day of Christmas, my 'cyber crim' true love gave to me…
A Rented Bot-Net

For those in the market for slightly more affordable chaos, a 10,000 strong bot-net might be right up your ally. For around £200 a day, you can be the commander of a small cyber army capable of carrying a distributed denial of service attack against a typical sized website.

Not sure if a bot-net is right one for you? Many creators offer a small amount of time for free, so you can be sure that you've made the correct choice.

And there are other uses for bot-nets besides DDoS'ing. Ad Click fraud involves getting bots to click on ads which generate revenue. If that revenue is going back into the pocket of the person running the bot-net, well…sometimes you gotta spend money to make money!

On the third day of Christmas, my 'cyber crim' true love gave to me...
Lots of Stolen Credentials

Buying stolen credentials online is about the same experience as buying any other product or service at your favourite retailer. The selection is massive, and depending on the sensitivity or quality of the credential, the price can range from a couple of quid to a few hundred.

For example, in the US, healthcare credentials are some of the most lucrative, with prices around $500 per set.

And why stop at credentials? Why not splash out this year and go for an entire identity? £2,000 can buy you all you need to cause someone a great deal of agony by using their electronic identity to open credit accounts.

On the fourth day of Christmas, my 'cyber crim' true love gave to me...
Stolen Credit Card Numbers

Stolen credit card numbers are an old classic as far as the online black market is concerned.

Obtained in various ways, be it phishing, database compromise or a skimming machine, your loved one will be blown away by the many tangible gifts you can provide thanks to your newly obtained lines of credit.

Retailing for about £15-£90 for a set, dependant on source country and issuing bank, it's not hard to find a stolen credit card number online.

Expect to pay more for a European number when compared to a number from the United States. More card numbers are stolen in the US than anywhere else, so supply is increased, driving prices down.

Another factor is that banks in Europe tend not to process transactions over the weekend, meaning it's easier from a fraudster to sneak in a few transactions before anyone notices.

On the fifth day of Christmas, my 'cyber crim' true love gave to me...
Access to Fortune 500 Network

If a botnet is not your thing and you want something a little more 'individual', you can find many compromised servers that reside on the networks of companies that are part of the Fortune 500. For less than £10 you can have a remote desktop session open on a machine in Manhattan! How you use it is up to you.

That said, prices do vary, and some machines cost more than others, dependant on the number of cores, amount of RAM in the machine, and precisely whose network it lives on.

On the sixth day of Christmas, my 'cyber crim' true love gave to me...
An Exploit Kit

Exploit Kits are best described as commercial grade software for automating the process of compromising machines for malicious purposes.

Prices vary, but are usually between £3,000 and £15,000 depending on options.

They provide dangerous capabilities to criminal gangs who would otherwise struggle to exploit cyberspace for their operations.

With features such as one click installation and a control panel for managing compromised machines, you'd be forgiven for thinking that the software had been developed at one of the major software development players.

Examples of exploit kits include Blackhole (by far the most prevalent), the Phoenix Exploit kit and Sweet Orange.

On the seventh day of Christmas, my 'cyber crim' true love gave to me...
Cybercrime-as-a-Service

Help a hacker, and give the gift of outsourcing this Christmas!

It is often said, the difference between a malicious hacker and a penetration tester is a scope of work – however in this case you'd be providing a malicious hacker with a scope of work...kind of.

For a few hundred to a few thousand pounds, depending on the complexity of the job, you can get someone to break into a computer or web application and complete a specific task, just like you get a painter/decorator in to get at that really annoying bit of the ceiling.

You might have to pay a small fee up front for your criminal consultant to size up the job and tell you if they have the skills to get it done.

On the eighth day of Christmas, my 'cyber crim' true love gave to me...
A Compromised Webcam

For those who find Big Brother too staged these days, why not give the gift of being able to keep an eye on someone who doesn't even know you are watching.

Direct access to compromised web cams, or to compromised computers is readily available online for a handful of dollars.

There have been many cases of young women being extorted with compromising or embarrassing photographs obtained from compromised webcams of late. With that in mind, it's not hard to think of reasons why the creepier crim would be interested in getting access to a compromised camera.

On the ninth day of Christmas, my 'cyber crim' true love gave to me... Stolen Gaming Credentials

You might be thinking, 'Seriously?, why would anyone want stolen gaming credentials?'. Well, the answer is, as with most things in this world – money.

Games may be games, but the gaming industry is as profitable as ever, and thanks to developments such as in game purchases, having access to someone's gaming account is potentially very valuable.

Credentials sell for pennies or pounds depending on what they'll unlock.

It is estimated that around £190 million worth of online gaming assets were stolen in 2011. That is anything but a game!

On the tenth day of Christmas, my 'cyber crim' true love gave to me... SMS Spamming Services

Ever get those random 'you were involved in an accident on this date – x.x.x, please call blah to get compensation' text messages?

They are scams of course, but where do they come from and how do they end up on your phone? Well, there is a strong possibility an SMS spamming service was used.

For around £150 you can rent a full-blown SMS spamming service for a day that leverages untraceable fake numbers, and a recipient number generator.

Of course, you could just chose your target, and really really annoy someone.

On the eleventh day of Christmas, my 'cyber crim' true love gave to me... Access to a Corporate Mailbox

You know how some sites won't let you sign up with a freebie mail box, like Gmail or Yahoo mail? They often request that you use a business email address. The reason being, such email addresses are seen as more credible.

So what happens if you need a corporate email account, but don't work at a corporation? Well you can buy access to one of course!

You can order from a list of pre-compromised accounts, or request an account belonging to a specific organisation.

Such custom service usually costs around £320.

On the twelfth day of Christmas, my 'cyber crim' true love gave to me...
A Banking Trojan

Everyone banks online these days, which is why there has been an upsurge in the number of banking Trojans and Trojan kits in the wild. You can purchase a Trojan kit and use to grab credentials that will grant you direct access to the cash. Just like robbing an ATM, but you can do it from your sofa.

Depending on the complexity of the Trojan you can be looking at a few hundred pounds – a bargain for those who prefer to take money belonging to others.

So there you have it...

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12 Banking Trojans,
11 Corporate Mailboxes,
10 Hours of SMS Spamming,
9 Stolen Gaming Creds,
8 Compromised Webcams,
7 Hours of Cybercrime-as-a-Service,
6 Exploit Kits,
5 Fortune 500 Computers,
4 Stolen Credit Cards,
3 Stolen Credential Sets,
2 Hours of Bot-Net time,
and a zero day exploit...

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All of these items are for sale online right now, and unlike the high street, there are no queues or crowds of people trying to beat you to them. Don't for a second think that people aren't buying them though. There are many transactions everyday.

For all the good the connected world has done for us, there is a always going to be an undertone of bad. This is something that isn't going to go away , the Internet, just like the real world, can be a worrying place at times. So protect yourself, your family and your business. Enjoy the festive season, and stay safe out there! From all of us at Encription – Merry Christmas!

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