

## Ransom E-mail Message

I received an odd email the other day where the person indicated that they knew my password (which was an old one that I used quite some time ago) and that unless I paid them \$4000 they were going to do something. I didn't really read the message in detail because it just showed up in my preview pane and I didn't open it. I'm just wondering if I should be concerned.

All of my passwords were changed long ago, so I'm thinking if they truly think that is my email address then when they try to use it they will be very disappointed. Has anyone else received a similar message? Am I okay to ignore it? Thanks for your help.

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I would consider reporting to Police/Prosecutor/FBI.

Paul G. Kostro, New Jersey

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I think it is a pretty common scam involving hacked passwords:

<https://krebsonsecurity.com/2018/07/sextortion-scam-uses-recipients-hacked-passwords/>

I heard about that scam on the Digital Detectives podcast:

<https://legaltalknetwork.com/podcasts/digital-detectives/2018/08/cyber-security-awareness-training/>

If you don't have time to listen, here is part of the transcript:

Sharon D. Nelson: . . . So many people got that sextortion email, where basically the subject line is a password. In my case, it was a password that back in the innocent days when we all reuse passwords, I have reused it a lot back and we were talking the beginning of the digital era here.

But I recognize –

John W. Simek: Were you that old?

Sharon D. Nelson: Don't ask if you want to go home with me dear. So I looked at that and of course, was struck by the fact that it was one of my known old passwords and when I look at the e-mail, of course, it wanted a payment in Bitcoin of \$3,200 and what the author claimed was that the author had been filming me watching pornography.

You can imagine some people would have a great deal of fear if that had in fact happened for obvious reasons. I, on the other hand was fearless. So knowing that I had not been doing this, I simply ignored the thing but we had people call us and mention no names here John, not even professions, but we had people who had sleepless nights which told us something about them.

John W. Simek: We had relatives too.

Sharon D. Nelson: Yes and calling us first thing in the morning because they were so afraid. So anyway that's sextortion.

Michael J. Polk

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Pointless exercise. That sort of spam has been going on for months, where they claim to have video of the individual engaging in onanism while watching pornography, and say they will send the video to your contact list unless you pay them. I've gotten it. My son has gotten it.

My daughter and wife have gotten it. It's based on someone overseas getting hold of an old database of users and passwords, sending the email to everyone, and hoping someone will fall for the scam and send them Bitcoin.

So yes, ignore it.

Michael A. Koenecke, Texas

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This is the newest scam. You may want to check your security and/or change passwords to be safe, but it's just a scam.

Teri Robins, Illinois

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I got the same or similar one several weeks ago and it sent me into a tailspin bc it said it was going to splice me into porn videos and send them to all my contacts if I didn't pay. They said they had access to my phone and that they had been videoing me from it so they had my images and would splice them in. It also provided me with a way to pay by bitcoin and all steps to take. It was a very old password that no one would have ever guessed... so I was in a panic.

However, I didn't reply. I called cops and they told me they were aware of the scam and not to reply. It was several weeks of tense months but nothing happened.

Hope that helps. Ps if you get video of me, it's not me. ;)

Micah G. Guilfoil Payne, Kentucky

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File a police report. Cross-check passwords to make sure no damage is possible.

Darrell G. Stewart, Texas

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Change to two factor authentication.

Jordan Rosenberg (paralegal), California

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I received three of these about a month ago. Ignore them. As I wrote to a trusted colleague:

"Sometimes it takes me a while to figure out a useful search string. I finally searched for "bitcoin blackmail rdp" and found ample evidence that the password is likely compromised but the threat is probably hooey. Probably no need for a re-install, just need to update the compromised password."

Robert Link, California

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They have one-upped the ransom email. My husband got a ransom snail-mail!

It was two pages long of "I know what you did. Don't go to the police.  
Give me \$ via bitcoin or I'll tell your wife."

Gonna deliver it to the police, but I'm sure nothing will come of it.

Teri Robins0

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I got the same email. It really freaked me out, even though I have not use that particular password for a long time. They threatened to publish all my pornography trails. Which doesn't really frighten me as I don't visit porn sites.

I contacted the local police who gave me a link to an FCC page that follows up on these things. I made a report, but assume nothing will come of it.

After about 3 weeks, I began getting numerous similar emails. I have decided to ignore them, although I did change ALL my passwords. It is still a bit creepy.

Nanci Bockelie, Utah

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Email is creepy enough but receiving follow up snail mail would really concern me. Glad you are reporting it.

Naomi C. Fujimoto, Hawaii

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NO follow up by snail mail, they are all email (I am pretty sure they have no idea who or where I am -- the emails are all addressed to nsb. But they do keep coming. Always the same. I guess there must be enough people freaked out that anyone would discover they have been visiting porn sites that the threat of disclosure works.

Nanci Bockelie

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My response was meant for Teri. Teri Robins said, "> They have one-upped the ransom email. My husband got a ransom snail-mail!

> It was two pages long of "I know what you did. Don't go to the police.

> Give me \$ via bitcoin or I'll tell your wife."

Naomi Fujimoto