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Growing Cyberthreat: Steganographic Malware Hiding In Images

As defenses against standard cyberattacks evolve, so do the methods of attack carried out by malicious actors. Security researchers say a type of attack known as steganographic malware is on the rise.

Steganographic malware requires an attacker to hide a secret algorithm within an image. An attacker then sends that image to a target's system. Once the image is on the victim's machine, a piece of malicious software is able to extract the information coded into the image to carry out the attack.

Steganographic attacks are most often carried out as a way to bypass security protocols as the information hidden in the image is undetectable to the human eye — it appears as McAfee's most recent threats report issued for June 2017 spotted a sudden spike in steganographic attacks, giving users a new reason to watch out for seemingly innocuous looking images that could secretly carry compromising code.