**MALWARE**

**Introduction to Malware**

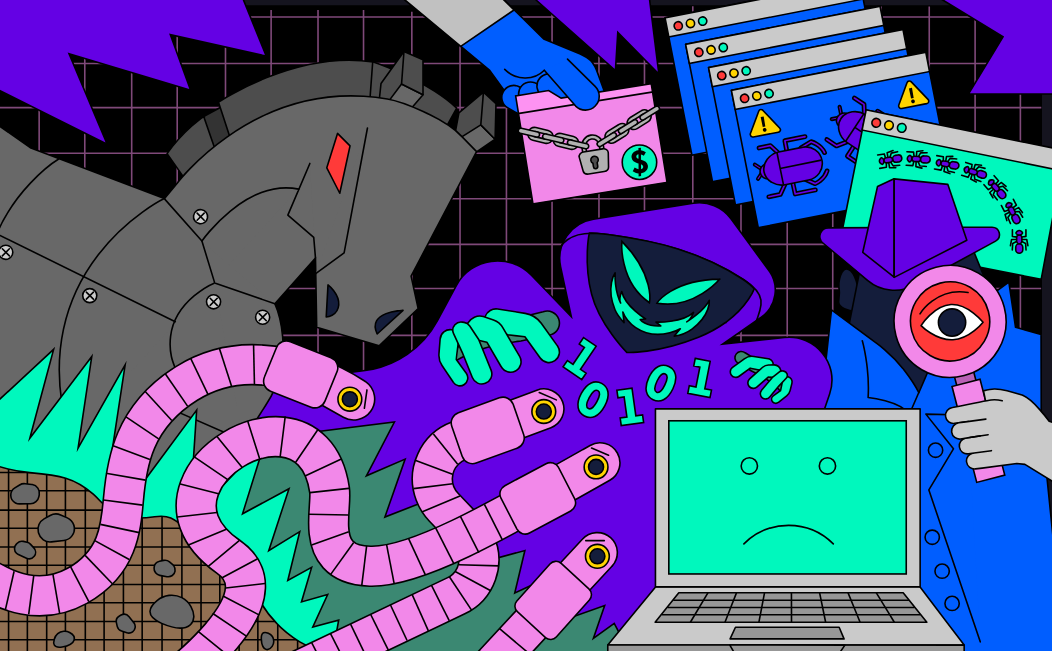
It’s your first day on the job at Cybercademy — a new cybersecurity organization that helps companies improve their security practices.

**Your Task**

Identify various types of [malware](https://www.codecademy.com/resources/docs/cybersecurity/malware) on an infected device and provide suggestions to the client on how they can prevent this from happening in the future.

But first, what is malware? *Malware* is malicious hardware, firmware, or software inserted into a system to cause damage or gain unauthorized access to a network. Any type of malware can greatly compromise the security principles of Confidentiality, Integrity, or Availability.

Throughout this lesson, you will learn how each type of malware gets into a system, what it does, and a short suggestion for how to be cautious against this form of malware.



### Adware

First, you open the web browser. The first page it opens to is a strange page about a computer cleaner that’s “guaranteed to make your computer run 10X faster!!”. What an odd choice for a homepage.

As you navigate the web, you notice lots of ads popping up all over the place. There are so many popping up on your screen that it’s actually slowing down the webpage and increasing page load times.

It’s clear this computer has [adware](https://www.codecademy.com/resources/docs/cybersecurity/malware/adware). Adware is unwanted software designed to throw advertisements on your screen. While not overly malicious on the surface, sometimes adware can come bundled with other, more harmful [malware](https://www.codecademy.com/resources/docs/cybersecurity/malware).

With enough adware on your machine, this could become a real performance issue.

### Your Suggestion

* You tell your client to make sure to not click on any strange links or download any untrustworthy files.
* A trustworthy antivirus software could also help with this issue.

### Instructions

Let’s play around with an example of how adware might work.

1. Click the “Click HERE to Download!” button on the sample webpage to the right.
2. Wow, that’s a lot of ads! Now, try clicking on the link on one of the ads and see what happens.

Potential adware won’t always be so obvious (and look so badly made) so don’t click on anything you’re not 100% sure of!



### Virus

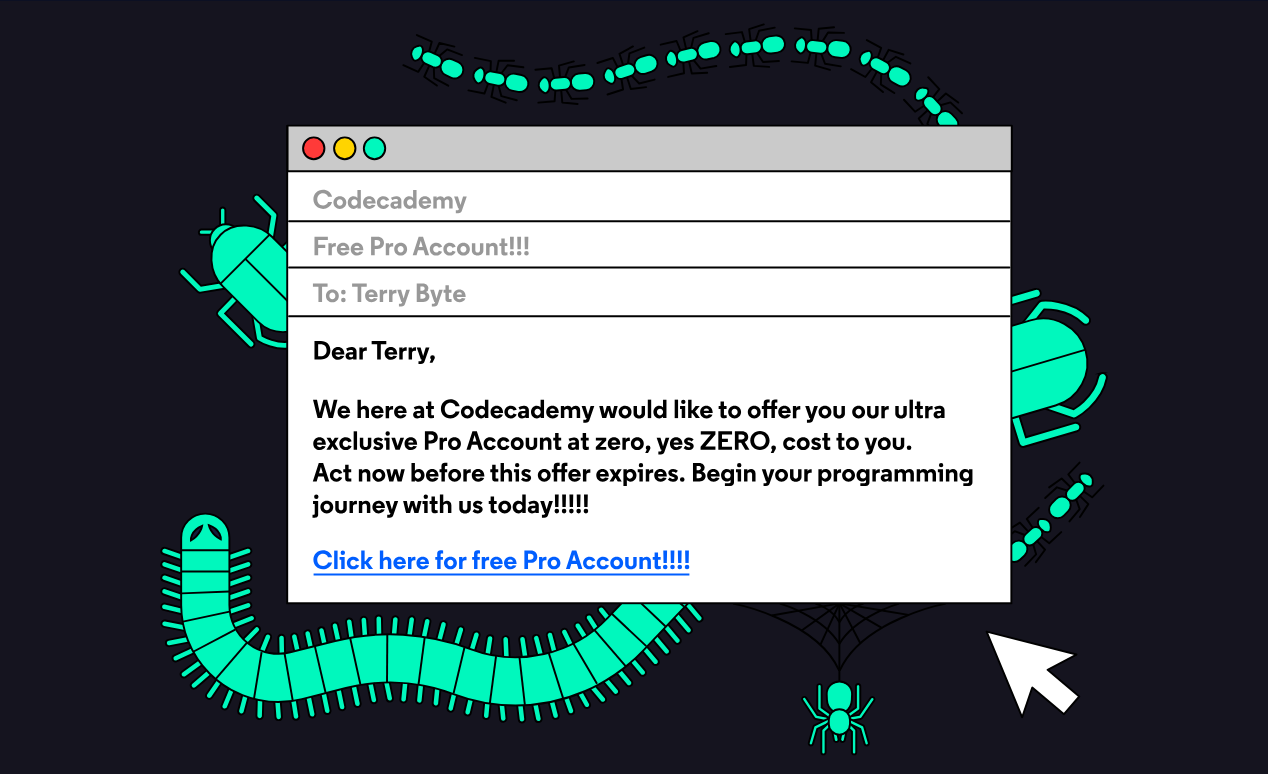
You navigate to your client’s email. Immediately, you see that your client opened some emails sent from an odd email address. You open the emails and see that the client clicked on links and likely downloaded files from these suspicious emails. Uh oh. Did your client download a virus?

A [virus](https://www.codecademy.com/resources/docs/cybersecurity/malware/virus) is a malicious self-replacing application that attaches itself to other programs and executables without the permission of the user. It’s possible a downloaded virus could alter or delete data on the computer.

If the virus was able to access or alter data, the confidentiality and integrity of that data is now in question.

### Your Suggestion

* Just like with [adware](https://www.codecademy.com/resources/docs/cybersecurity/malware/adware), avoid suspicious links and install trustworthy antivirus software.
* Immediately report suspicious emails to your IT department and never open them.



**Worms**

What type of [virus](https://www.codecademy.com/resources/docs/cybersecurity/malware/virus) is this? You check your client’s “Sent Emails” folder and notice your client recently sent the same email to everyone on their contacts list. The emails have the same subject line as the malicious email they received. It almost seems like the email replicated itself…

Aha! Rather than a virus, which needs to be attached to a file or application to spread, you may have found a worm.

A *worm* is self-replicating code that copies itself from computer to computer without user intervention. This worm could be just as dangerous as a virus.

The worm could also replicate so much that it overloads your client’s system. By doing this, the worm could bring down the system and violate availability.

**Your Suggestion**

* Follow the previous suggestions for [adware](https://www.codecademy.com/resources/docs/cybersecurity/malware/adware) and viruses.
* Monitor the computer for any unexpected changes! Is it slower than usual? Is there less hard drive space than expected? Have files mysteriously appeared or disappeared? These could all be signs of worms.

**Instructions**

Checkpoint 1 Passed

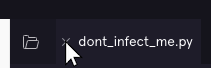
**1.**

How does a worm work? While worms don’t attach themselves to files, we’ll use files to simulate their duplicative nature!

First, let’s look at some innocent files that our “worm” will infect.

Press “Run” to run **dont\_infect\_me.py**.

Press the “x” next to the filename to close the file.



Hint

Make sure you ran the correct file! If you did, make sure the file says:

print("Don't infect me, please!")

Checkpoint 2 Passed

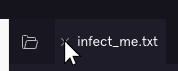
**2.**

Let’s look at another innocent file.

Make sure you’ve closed the **dont\_infect\_me.py** file. You should now see the **infect\_me.txt** file in the workspace.

Press “Run” to run **infect\_me.txt**. (Nothing will happen because it’s a text file!)

Press the “x” next to the filename to close the file.



Hint

Make sure you ran the correct file! If you did, make sure the file says:

What? Why me? I'm just a text file.

Checkpoint 3 Passed

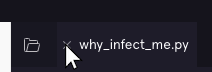
**3.**

Let’s look at our last innocent file.

Make sure you’ve closed the **infect\_me.txt** file. You should now see the **why\_infect\_me.py** file in the workspace.

Press “Run” to run **why\_infect\_me.py**.

Press the “x” next to the filename to close the file.



Hint

Make sure you ran the correct file! If you did, make sure the file says:

print("What's going on?")  
  
print("What are you doing?")  
  
print("I'm super important!")

Checkpoint 4 Passed

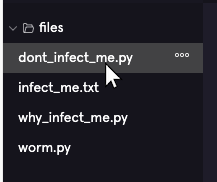
**4.**

Finally! We’ve reached the worm file.

What this file will do is search for any python file with “infect\_me” in its name. You don’t need to understand this code, all you need to do is run it!

Press the “Run” button.

Now, click the folder button in the workspace to look at the files.An image showing a cursor pressing the folder icon

Open the **dont\_infect\_me.py**, **infect\_me.txt**, and **why\_infect\_me.py** files.

The “worm” should have copied itself into the files with the .py extension.

If you didn’t close those files, you will need to close and reopen them to see your worm in action!

Hint

If the files look exactly the same, try running **worm.py** again, closing each of the files, and reopening them again.

You should see that the worm copied itself into all of the files with the .py file extension!