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The Dutch National Police, Europol, Intel Security and Kaspersky Lab join forces in No More Ransom-- an initiative aimed at informing the public about the dangers of ransomware, as well as helping victims recover their data without paying cybercriminals.

No More Ransom currently offers downloadable tools for the decryption of PCs affected by common ransomware attacks, including CoinVault, Bitcryptor, Cryptxxx 1, 2 and 3. In fact, the launch of the initiative comes about with the takedown of the servers holding the decryption keys of Shade, a ransomware variant with a victim count reaching 160000.

The advice on offer by No More Ransom is basic but decent-- do regular backups, keep software up-to-date, use a solid antivirus, show file extensions by default and trust no one. In case of attack, the initative insists one should not pay the ransom, but to do so one needs to hold regular backups. Some organisations ended up prey to such attacks, including the University of Calgary, which paid $20000 to restore access to systems and data.

Meanwhile a "Crypto Sherrif" section allows the public to help in the effort by uploading malware samples and a description helping identify the kind of ransomware affecting their systems.

"For a few years now ransomware has become a dominant concern for EU law enforcement. It is a problem affecting citizens and business alike, computers and mobile devices, with criminals developing more sophisticated techniques to cause the highest impact on the victim's data," Europol says. "Initiatives like the No More Ransom project shows that linking expertise and joining forces is the way to go in the successful fight against cybercrime. We expect to help

many people to recover control over their files, while raising awareness and educating the population on how to maintain their devices clean from malware."

According to Kaspersky, attacks are on the up-- Q1 2016 saw it block ransomware from 34900 devices, while detected mobile ransomware Trojans total over 2800. As for the 2015-2016 periods, ransomware attacks total 718000, a 550% increase over the previous year.

Go No More Ransom