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Malware-as-a-Service: How cybercrime is sold as a service

What it is Malware-as-a-Service, or MaaS, is a criminal business model in which developers provide malware, infrastructure, updates, or operational support to other attackers. Customers may pay a subscription, purchase access, or share...

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What it is

Malware-as-a-Service, or MaaS, is a criminal business model in which developers provide malware, infrastructure, updates, or operational support to other attackers. Customers may pay a subscription, purchase access, or share profits. The service can involve stealers, loaders, botnets, phishing kits, ransomware, or combinations of these tools.

How it works

A provider may operate a web panel where customers configure campaigns, build payloads, view stolen data, or manage infected devices. This division of labor lets less technical criminals run attacks while specialists maintain code and infrastructure. Access brokers and laundering

services can supply other parts of the same ecosystem.

Key points

- MaaS describes how malicious capability is supplied, not one particular malware family.
- Professional-looking support, documentation, and pricing do not make the service legitimate.
- Reusable platforms allow the same malware to appear in unrelated campaigns with different targets.

Defensive implications

- Detect behavior and infection chains rather than relying only on one campaign name or hash.
- Harden email, identity, remote access, and software installation paths commonly sold to affiliates.
- Share indicators with enough context to distinguish infrastructure, payload, and operator.
- Prepare for follow-on activity because an initial loader may sell or transfer access to another group.

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