The Android platform has more malware than the iPhone. It's a statement of fact. But why? What facets of Android phones make them seemingly less safe than iPhone? Are they really more dangerous, or is the Android platform really just a victim of its own success, and perhaps suffering from a bit of fear, uncertainty, and doubt.

I often hear these sorts questions from co-workers and friends about which device is safer, or why Android seems to be more prone to malware. To be honest, it does seem that the iPhone is a safer device to use, but in actuality it can be just as dangerous, if not more, simply because Android has taken on the stigma of the more "dangerous" mobile phone platform. Why is that?

First, iPhone seems safer because Apple has imposed some rather stringent controls over what software makes its way onto the Apple App Store. The open source style of Android and its App Market does enable the malware writers, but it also means that software submitted to it's directory has millions of eyeballs looking at, vice just the select few at Apple.

The same can be said with regard to firmware and O/S type vulnerabilities, which research shows that the iOS platform might actually have more of. While Apple does a good job of fixing these security problems, it goes to show that iPhone isn't necessarily safer than Android, it simply has less publicized vulnerabilities, and vulnerabilities which are harder for people outside of the IT industry to understand. The Android platforms open market model makes it easier to distribute malware, and unfortunately for Android, malware is something that even the least savvy technology journalist can write about.

Second, what is it about the Android platform, that seems to be ringing the dinner bell as far as cyber criminals are concerned. Well, apart from the open market which enables the bad guys to more easily distribute malware, how bout the meteoric rise in popularity of Android? Cyber criminals are in it for financial gain, and they are going to operate where the money is. While Apple may be the world's wealthiest company currently, Android is the top mobile device platform in the world.

Just as Microsoft Windows is the dominant desktop platform, Android is going to receive an unfair amount of attention from the criminals, simply because the number of potential targets is so much higher. Again, the open approach to the way Google handles the Android App Market does make it easier to distribute malware, but such is the cost of having the freedom of an

Open Source platform. This isn't to say that iPhone users have no freedom of choice, nor that Android is completely open to the wolves, but in general, the Android platform lends itself to more techno savvy individuals.

The open source structure of Android allows developers and handset owners to do nearly whatever they want to the platform. Does this make Android more dangerous? Perhaps. But it also allows malware and vulnerabilities that are discovered to be identified by the community, and fixed by Google, very quickly.

How does this all relate to Android having more malware? Android has more users. More users means more targets, and more opportunities to make money. So if you're using an Android phone, does that equate to swimming in a sea of sharks? Maybe. But, the tools exist to protect yourself, you just have to remember to use them.

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