Samsung accidentally makes the case for not owning a smart TV



Samsung has reminded owners of its smart TVs that they should be regularly scanning for malware using its built-in virus scanning software. “Prevent malicious software attacks on your TV by scanning for viruses on your TV every few weeks,” a tweet from the company’s US support account reads with a video attachment that demonstrates the laborious process.

The obvious question here is why in the world doesn’t Samsung automate this process. When so many people don’t even know how to turn off motion smoothing, what are the chances that they’re going to be mindful of security practices? It also illustrates how dumb some smart TVs can be.

> *Scanning your computer for malware viruses is important to keep it running smoothly. This also is true for your QLED TV if it’s connected to Wi-Fi!*
>
> *Prevent malicious software attacks on your TV by scanning for*

> *viruses on your TV every few weeks. Here's how pic.twitter.com/7hWUfJwy1K*
>
> *— Samsung Support USA (@SamsungSupport) June 17, 2019*

It's unclear whether the tweet has been put out in response to a recent threat. There haven't been any recent security vulnerabilities reported for Samsung's smart TVs, but back in 2017 WikiLeaks revealed that the CIA had developed a piece of software called "Weeping Angel" that was capable of turning Samsung's smart TVs into a listening device. Less than a month later a security researcher found 40 zero-day vulnerabilities in Samsung's smart TV operating system, Tizen. At the time, Samsung released a blog post detailing the security features of its TVs, which includes its ability to detect malicious code on both its platform and application levels.

Virus scans are another reminder of how annoying modern smart TVs can be. Sure, they have pretty much every streaming app under the sun built in, and Samsung's models can even be used to stream games from a local PC. But they also contain microphones that can be a privacy risk, and are entrusted with credit card details for buying on-demand video content. Even when everything's working as the manufacturer intended, they can be yet another way of putting ads in front of you, either on your home screen or even in some cases directly into your own video content.

Samsung's little PSA about scanning for "malware viruses" (eh hem) might be a sound security practice on a Samsung smart TV, but it's also an excellent reminder for why you might not want to buy one in the first place.

https://www.theverge.com/2019/6/17/18681683/samsung-smart-tv-virus-scan-malware-attack-tweet