

## Sodinokibi Ransomware Hits Travelex, Demands \$3 Million

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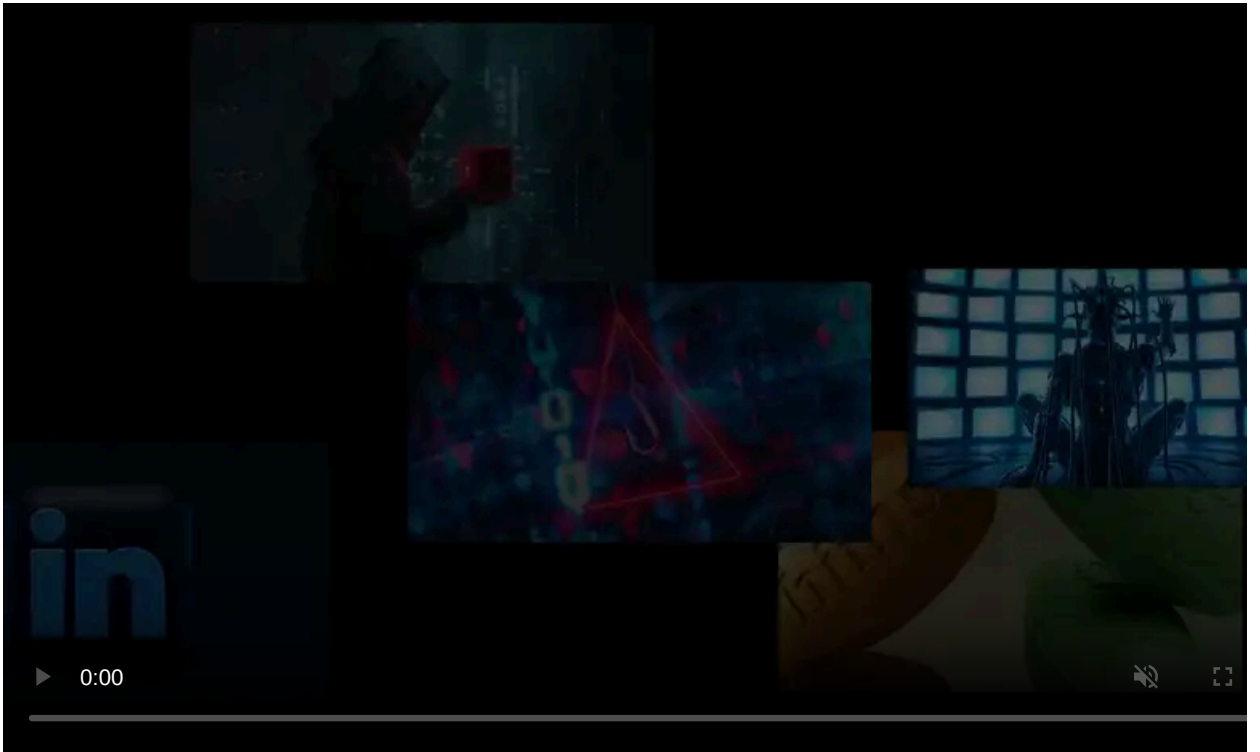
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It's been more than six days since a cyber attack took down the services of the international foreign currency exchange company Travelex and BleepingComputer was able to confirm that the company systems were infected with Sodinokibi ransomware.


The attack occurred on December 31 and affected some Travelex services. This prompted the company to take offline all its computer systems, a precaution meant "to protect data and prevent the spread of the virus."

As a result, customers could no longer use the website or the app for transactions or make payments using credit or debit cards at its more than 1,500 stores across the world. Hundreds of customer complaints came pouring in via social media since the outage began.



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## STATEMENT ON IT ISSUES AFFECTING TRAVELEX SERVICES



Travelex confirms that a software virus was discovered on New Year's Eve which has compromised some of its services.

As a precautionary measure in order to protect data and prevent the spread of the virus, we immediately took all our systems offline. Our investigation to date shows no indication that any personal or customer data has been compromised.

The company's network of branches continues to provide foreign exchange services manually.

We have deployed teams of IT specialists and external cyber security experts who have been working continuously since New Year's Eve to isolate the virus and restore affected systems.

**We apologise to all our customers for any inconvenience caused as a result.**

We are doing all we can to restore our full services as soon as possible. Please DM any queries so that we can try to help resolve any issues as quickly as possible.

In [replies to customers](#) today, Travelex was unable to provide updates about progress on restoring its services. In the meantime, the company shows a cyber incident notification on the main page of its website and "planned maintenance" on other pages.

### All network locked, files stolen

On January 3, ComputerWeekly magazine received inside information that the London-based foreign currency exchange company fell victim to a ransomware attack, albeit the malware family remained unknown.

The same news outlet today [reported](#) that the ransomware used in the Travelex attack is Sodinokibi.

BleepingComputer was able to independently confirm that Travelex systems were indeed infected by REvil ransomware. We were told that the extension added to some of the encrypted files was a string of more than five random characters, similar to .u3i7y74. This malware typically adds different extensions to files locked on other computer systems.

#### Sodinokibi

You probably already know about us. Many publications call us Sodinokibi.

If you've read them, you know that our Ransomware is different in its **technology and reliability**.

**We've developed the best data encryption and decryption system available today.**

Our competitors allow themselves to lose and destroy their victims' data during the encryption or decryption process, making it impossible to recover the data.

We don't allow ourselves to do that.

So you should be glad you were infected by our guys, not our competitors. This means that when you pay for the decryption, **you can be sure that all your data will be decrypted.**

In addition to the ransom note, the Sodinokibi crew told BleepingComputer that they encrypted the entire Travelex network and copied more than 5GB of personal data, which includes dates of birth, social security numbers, card information and other details.

We were told that they deleted the backup files and that the ransom demanded was \$3 million; if not paid in seven days (countdown likely started on December 31), the attackers said they will publish the data they stole.

## Travelex left the door open

Details about how the intrusion occurred are not available at the moment but Travelex was running insecure services before the incident, which could explain how the attacker may have breached the network.

The company is using the Pulse Secure VPN enterprise solution for secure communication, which was patched last year against an "incredibly bad" vulnerability (CVE-2019-11510), as security researcher Kevin Beaumont describes it in a recent blog post.

On unpatched systems, the flaw "allows people without valid usernames and passwords to remotely connect to the corporate network the device is supposed to protect, turn off multi-factor authentication controls, remotely view logs and cached passwords in plain text (including Active Directory account passwords)," Beaumont [explains](#).

A [public exploit](#) for this has been available since August 21, 2019. Soon after, someone started scanning the internet for vulnerable endpoints.

Troy Mursch, chief research officer at Bad Packets, found about 15,000 systems that were directly exploitable via this security issue. Mursch then started to contact organizations at risk, warning them about the danger of leaving their systems unpatched.

Travelex was one of the companies Mursch alerted of the issue but he did not get a reply:

Attackers typically spend significant time on the network before deploying the ransomware and encrypting files. This is to get familiar with the network and find systems with important data and backups, to increase their chances of getting paid.

Furthermore, Kevin Beaumont discovered that Travelex had on its Amazon cloud platform Windows servers that were exposed to the internet and did not have the Network Level Authentication feature enabled. This means that anyone could connect to the server before authenticating.

**Update [06/01/2020, 18:26 EST]:** Pulse Secure issued a statement today about ransomware actors exploiting unpatched VPN servers. The company is not validating any recent findings as it does not have any data about the attacks.

"As of now, we are unaware of receiving reports directly from customers about this derivative exploit – no firsthand evidence," Pulse Secure told BleepingComputer.

The current communication underlines that a patch for the software is available since April 24, 2019, and that customers were informed multiple times about the fix, via emails, in-product and support website notifications.

"Actors will take advantage of the vulnerability that was reported on Pulse Secure, Fortinet and Palo Alto VPN products – and in this case, exploit unpatched VPN servers to propagate malware, REvil (Sodinokibi), by distributing and activating the Ransomware through interactive prompts of the VPN interface to the users attempting to access resources through unpatched, vulnerable Pulse VPN servers." Scott Gordon (CISSP), Pulse Secure Chief Marketing Officer.

Since the release of the patch, support engineers have been available 24x7 for customers needing help to solve the problem, including those not under an active maintenance contract.



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Automated pentesting proves the path exists. BAS proves whether your controls stop it. Most teams run one without the other.

This whitepaper maps six validation surfaces, shows where coverage ends, and provides practitioners with three diagnostic questions for any tool evaluation.

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Source: <https://www.bleepingcomputer.com/news/security/sodinokibi-ransomware-hits-travellex-demands-3-million/>