



# **PRESS RELEASE**

## **Computer Virus Affects Police Department Servers**



January 25, 2017

On December 12, 2016, the Cockrell Hill Police Department became aware that files on the server had been corrupted by a computer virus. They immediately disconnected the server and all computers from the internet and all state database systems and were able to contain the virus. After investigating the issue, it was determined that the virus had been introduced onto the network from a spam email that had come from a cloned email address imitating a department issued email address.

After consulting with IT staff, it was discovered that the virus was a type commonly known as “ransomware.” There was no way to contact anyone regarding the virus. An internet webpage was made available that stated a decryption key would be provided if a Bitcoin transfer were made to the creators of the virus, who were left unnamed. The approximate cost of the Bitcoins and transfer fees would be nearly \$4,000.00. The FBI Cybercrimes unit was contacted and upon consultation with them it was determined there were no guarantees that the decryption file would actually be provided, therefore the decision was made to not go forward with the Bitcoin transfer and to simply isolate and wipe the virus from the servers.

The virus was determined to be an “OSIRIS” virus, however since no further efforts were made to move forward with any payments, it is unknown for certain where the virus originated from. Computer data from the original spam email was provided to the FBI for their use in any potential investigation.

This virus affected all Microsoft Office Suite documents, such as Word documents and Excel files. In addition, all body camera video, some in-car video, some in-house surveillance video, and some photographs that were stored on the server were corrupted and were lost. No information contained in any of those documents, videos, or photographs was extracted or transmitted outside of the Police Department.

Files that were affected did go back to 2009, however hard copies of ALL documents and the vast majority of the videos and photographs are still in the possession of the Police Department on CD or DVD. It is unknown at this time how many total digital copies of documents were lost, as it is also unknown how many videos or photographs that could have assisted newer cases will not be available, although the number of affected prosecutions should remain relatively small.