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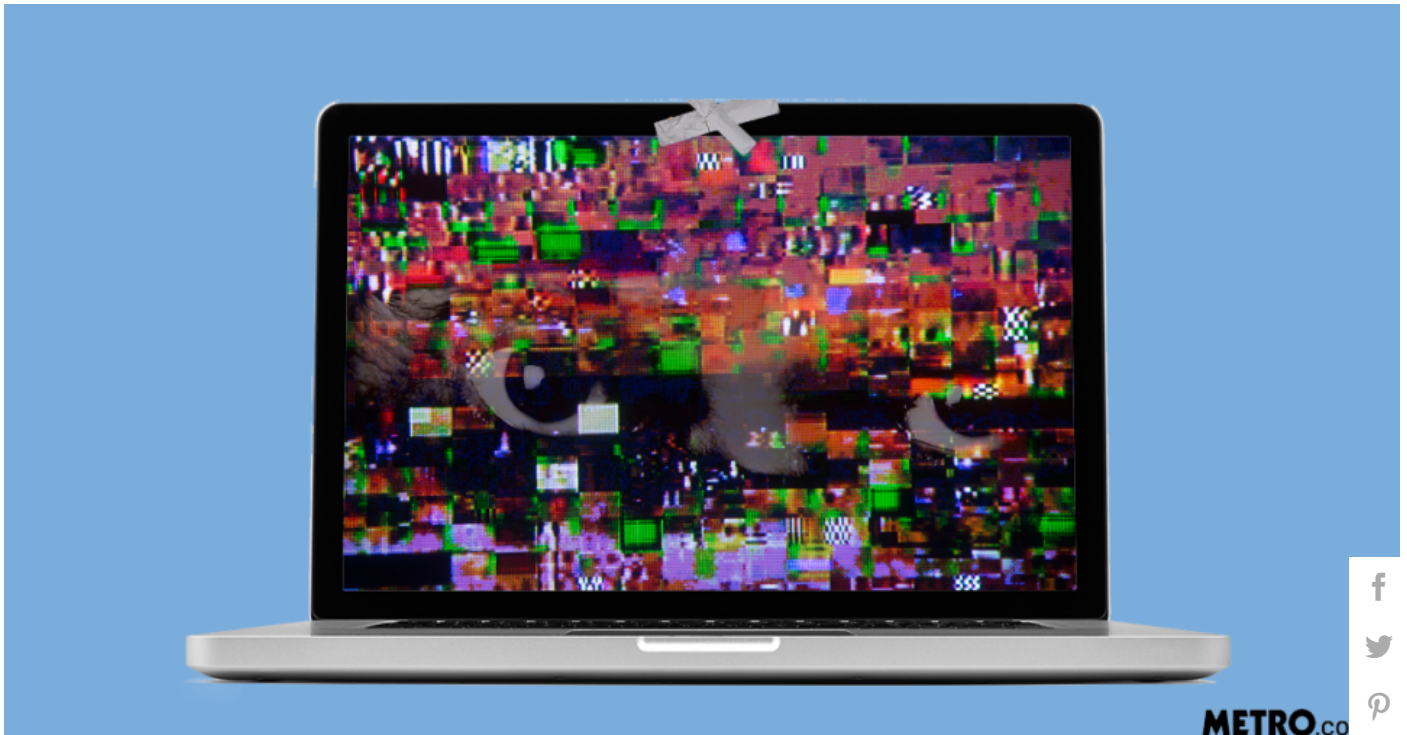
If you don't cover your webcam you could end up a 'slave'

Jen Mills
Saturday 30 Dec 2017 11:00 am

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Someone could be watching you (Picture: Metro/Getty)

Mark Zuckerberg does it. The FBI does it. And you should do it too.

No, not collecting mass amounts of data through surveillance — this is about webcams, and how you could be letting people around the world into your bedroom without having any idea you're doing it.
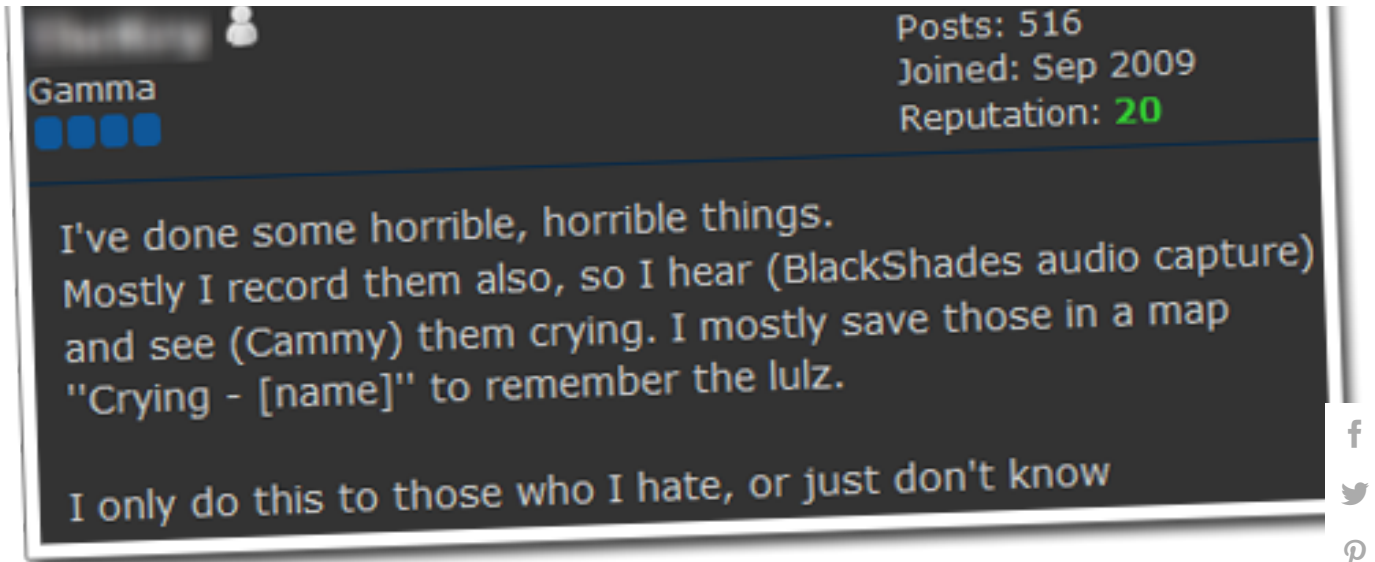
It's easy to imagine it's paranoid to tape over your webcam, or paint over it with nail varnish.

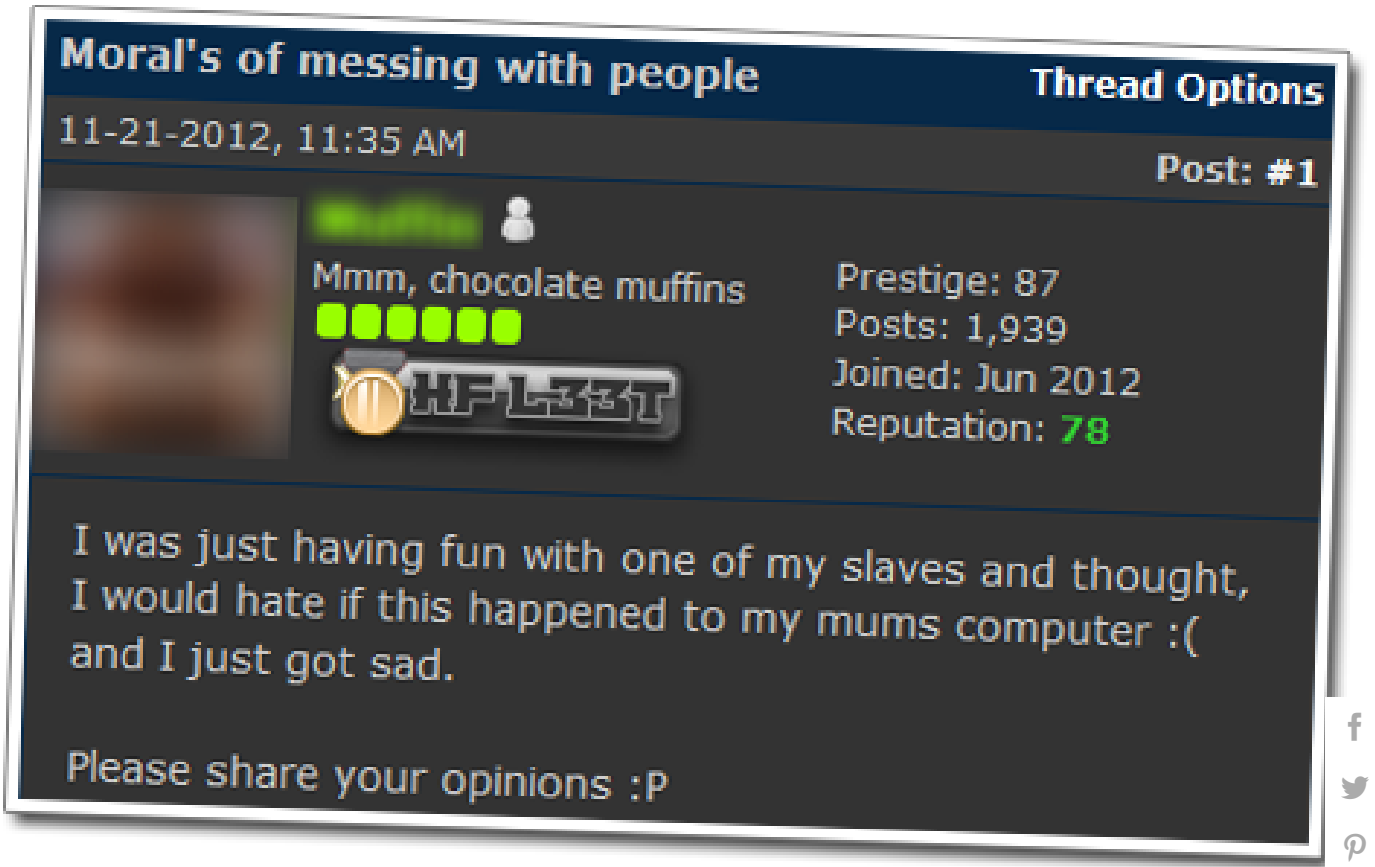But if you don't, you could end up some hacker's 'slave'.

To find out exactly what could happen we spoke to security expert Candid Wueest, who works with Symantec.

He said there are whole communities where people boast about the unsuspecting users whose computers they have taken control of and who they watch for fun.

Posts: 516
Joined: Sep 2009
Reputation: 20

Gamma

I've done some horrible, horrible things.
Mostly I record them also, so I hear (BlackShades audio capture)
and see (Cammy) them crying. I mostly save those in a map
''Crying - [name]'' to remember the lulz.

I only do this to those who I hate, or just don't know

There are secret forums where people discuss those they control (Picture: Symantec)

Moral's of messing with people   **Thread Options**

11-21-2012, 11:35 AM

Post: #1

Mmm, chocolate muffins

HFL33T

Prestige: 87
Posts: 1,939
Joined: Jun 2012
Reputation: 78

I was just having fun with one of my slaves and thought,
I would hate if this happened to my mums computer :(
and I just got sad.

Please share your opinions :P

People just laughed at this poster who expressed sympathy (Picture: Symantec)

Often they will have no idea that they're under surveillance, and that their daily activities are being uploaded to web forums where hackers ridicule them for being 'stupid' enough to be vulnerable.

'Unfortunately there are some people just doing it for the fun of it, having power over others,' Candid said.

The way it works is that people somehow download malware onto their laptop — often by clicking a suspicious link — which installs software to take over the
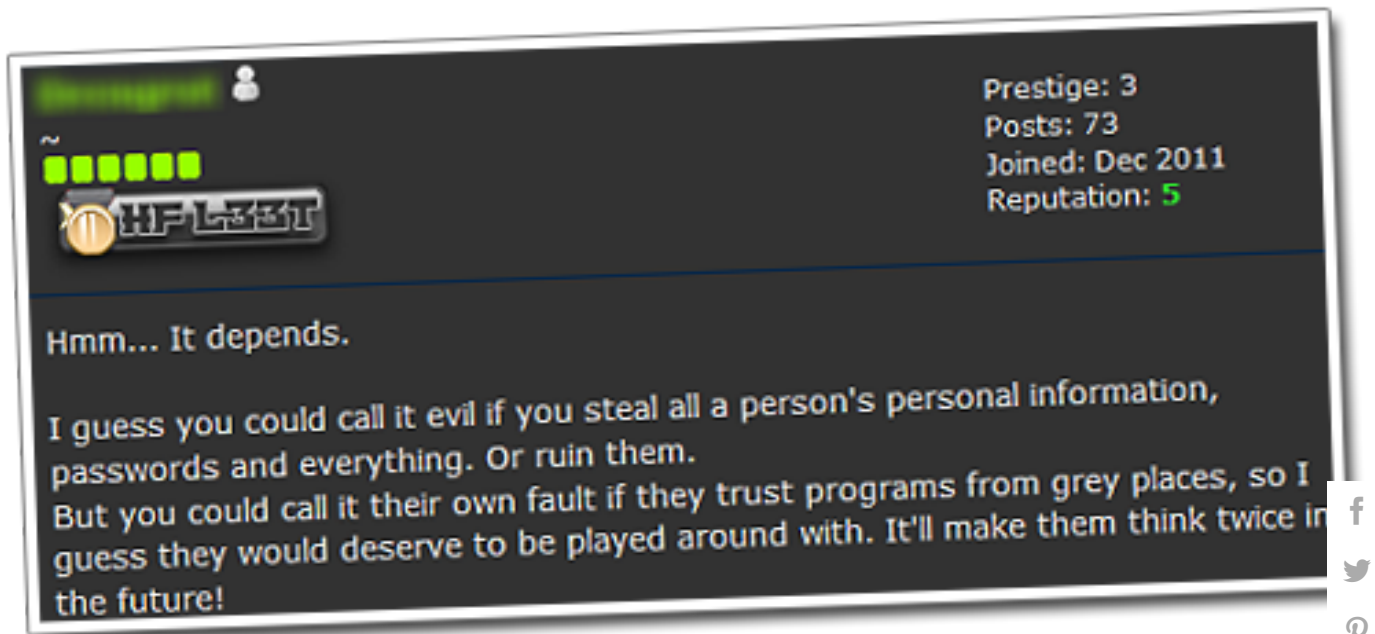
light up the night sky on New Year's Eve »

Hackers can then see everything you visit online, what you type on the keyboard, the files you open, and they can control your webcam and microphone.

Don't worry, he 'just spied on them and then left them alone' (Picture: Symantec)

Interesting ethics here (Picture: Symantec)

Some try to make money out of it, for example via 'sextortion' (if someone masturbates in front of a laptop, hackers can threaten to post the video on your Facebook and LinkedIn if you don't pay a ransom).

But some just get kicks out of being able to see people, having a keyhole into their lives which they don't know about.

Suddenly I don't feel so complacent about my laptop, which could be 'a CCTV camera watching everything I do, not controlled by me'.

Some just get kicks out of being able to watch people (Picture: Getty)

'There's an underground economy, forums where people brag about how many people have fallen victim,' Candid said.

If hackers control the speakers, they can play haunting noises or voices while you're in front of the laptop, just to watch how you react.
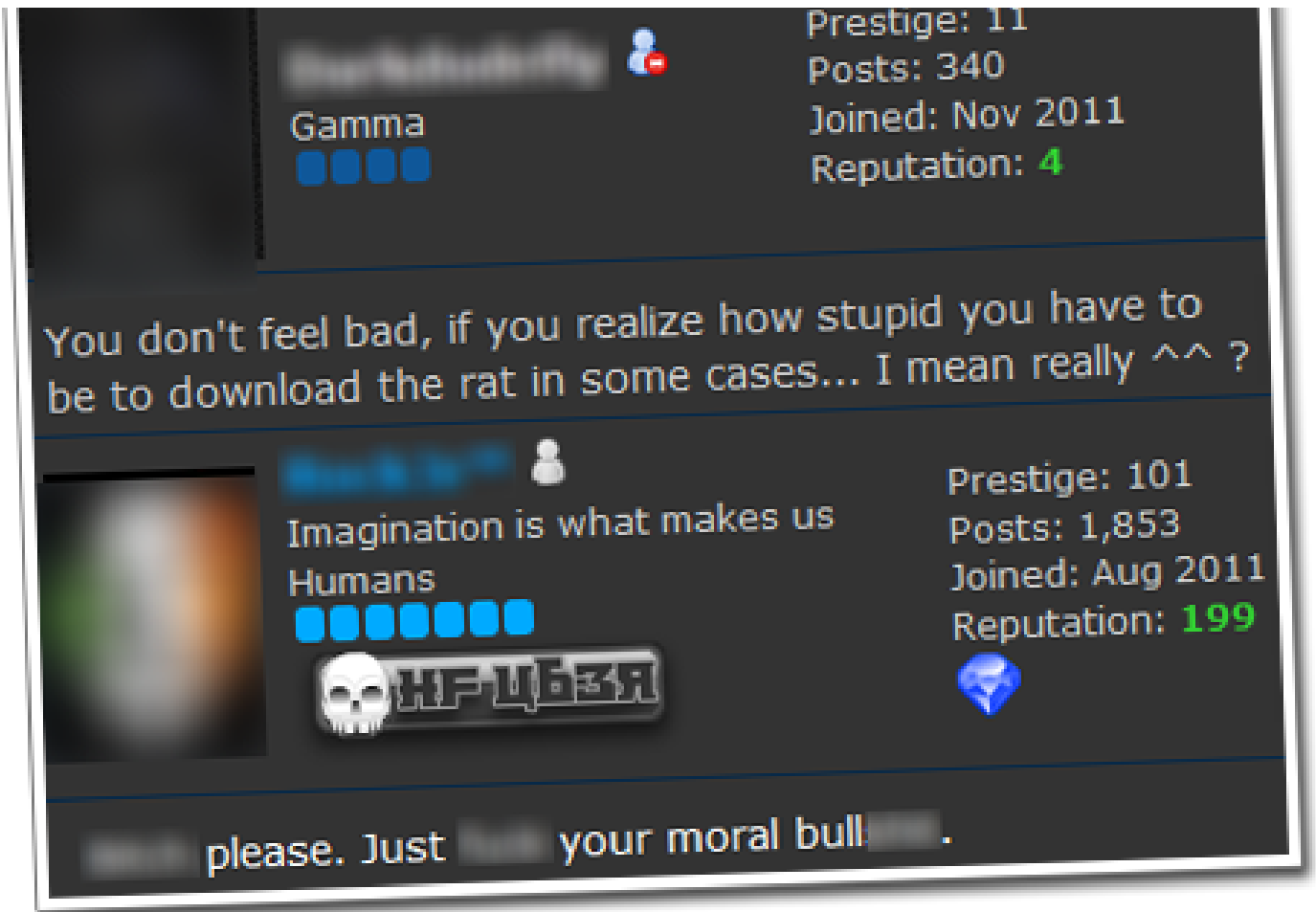
'If they have someone who really freaked out or cried in front of the machine, they boast about that,' he said.

'It's one of the ugliest types of cyber bullying we've seen.'

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Candid Wueest said taping over the camera is one of the simplest but most effective ways to protect yourself.

'I cover up mine, on all my laptops, and just uncover it when I need to use it,' he told Metro.co.uk.

The risk is real. Hackers can use malware to compromise your machine. Besides stealing credit card details, they can spy on you.

How to keep your computer safe

- **Make sure your regularly update your operating system and browser. This will fix any bugs and vulnerabilities that hackers could exploit.**
- Also use security software which scans for any dodgy programmes and prevents them appearing in the first place.
- **Have strong passwords and don't use the same ones in many different places**
- Be cautious when opening links if you're not certain where they come from and that they can be trusted

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check for any active vulnerabilities.

Candid said he's aware of 'a few 100 cases in the UK each month' — but the true number could be much higher, as many people don't go to the police because of the nature of the crime.

They may just pay the ransom, often around £100.

This isn't recommended though, as there's no guarantee it will stop the hackers from coming back.

The best thing is protect your computer in the first place — and avoid doing anything in front of a camera that you wouldn't want your colleagues to see.
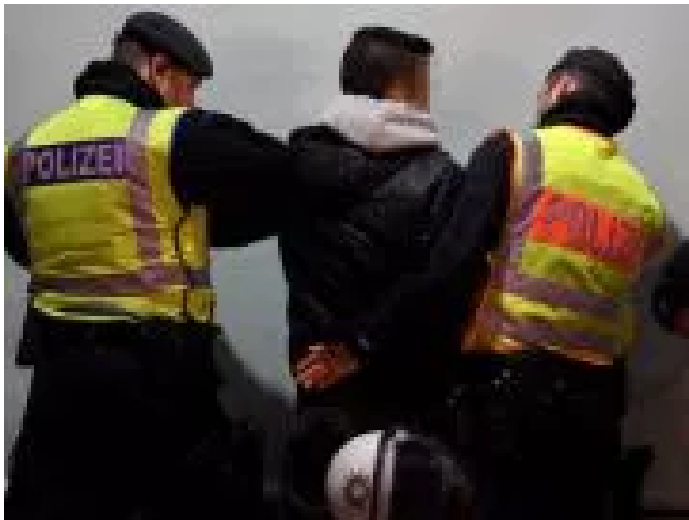
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