

# Malware's AI-powered evolution threatens your money

Artificial intelligence (AI) and machine learning (ML) are revolutionising industries, but this digital double-edged sword has a dark side – malware attacks are becoming alarmingly sophisticated. It's a threat to your finances, especially if you're in the midst of a major purchase like a home.



Jackie Smith, head of Buyers Trust

"Malware is software designed to steal your data and disrupt your life," warns Jackie Smith, head of Buyers Trust. "These attacks open the door to financial ruin. Cybercriminals can steal identities, drain your bank accounts, and intercept sensitive communications."

Smith, with concern, notes growing cyberattacks in South Africa's property sector where large funds change hands.



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"First-time homebuyers making substantial deposits are especially vulnerable. Cybercriminals see these transactions as prime targets for a quick payday."

## How malware infects your devices

Malware often infiltrates your devices through innocent-looking links or tempting downloads. Be wary of anything promising "free prizes" or similar lures. Once those viruses or spyware are unleashed, attackers gain access to your most sensitive information.

Disturbingly, AI and ML take malware to the next level. According to AV-Test, 30 million new malware samples surfaced in 2023 alone. AI helps create hyper-realistic phishing attacks, tricking even the cautious. Worse yet, AI-powered malware can learn to evade your antivirus defences.

There are ways to fight back. Smith emphasises, "Buyers Trust acts as a secure haven for your deposit. We use advanced technologies like multi-factor authentication and encrypted communications to create barriers cybercriminals struggle to overcome."

**How to spot trouble:**

- Slow devices
- Unexplained lack of disk space
- Frequent crashes or errors
- Friends getting strange messages you didn't send
- Unexpected browser pop-ups

"If you see these signs," Smith urges, "disconnect your device from the internet immediately! Contact a cybersecurity expert for help."

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