

Malware costs \$491 Billion in Perspective



Peter Silva, 2014-26-03

A recent [joint study](#) from IDC and the National University of Singapore (NUS) predicts that companies around the globe will spend around \$491 billion in 2014 for fixes and recovery from data breaches and malware. The sponsor, Microsoft, also noted that pirated software tweaked with intent is a common method of getting inside. Consumers will likely spend \$25 billion as a result of those security threats. \$491 billion is a lot of change and in the spirit of [Mobile Threats Rise 261% in Perspective](#), I wanted to know what else costs \$491 billion.

Apparently, quite a few things!

[U.S. motorists may spend a record \\$491 billion for gasoline this year](#). Expensive oil and increased exports have kept our fuel prices high this year. We are still under the 2008 average gas price record but we will still spend more due to gas going up sooner in the year and staying high longer. I know I've seen \$4.11 here in California where the average is \$3.94. While the winter blend production does bring some relief, don't expect major drops due to higher global demand along with the various feuds in the world.

Back in 2005, the US House of Representatives passed a [\\$491 billion defense bill](#). This was when we were still in Iraq and the only reason I find this interesting is that the cyber-war can now cost as much as real wars. Not really apple to apples admittedly, but I often talk about how our digital worlds are ~~colliding~~ integrating with our physical lives. Either way, the costs can be very real.

Now at the 3 year mark of the Fukushima meltdown, property damage so far has been [assessed at approximately US\\$200 billion](#) but some estimates show that the total burden will be \$491 billion. While one could never put a price on the 19,000 people lost from the earthquake and tsunami, it is kinda spooky that breaches and malware are on par with nuclear disasters.

According to the Global Business Travel Association ([GBTA](#)) Foundation business travel was responsible for about [3% of U.S. GDP in 2012 or \\$491 billion](#). Essentially, every dollar of business travel spending generated about \$1.28 in GDP. Of the \$491 billion total, \$208 billion accrued directly to businesses that served travelers or meeting attendees.

In 2011 the European chemical industry contributed to 20.9% of the world's chemical sales valued at €2353 billion, generating [€ 491 billion of revenues](#) and employing 1.16 million people.

In 2012-13, [India's total imports was \\$491 billion](#) according to their Finance Minister.

And finally, the [Earth is 491 billion feet from sun](#), give or take.

The malware market is on par with the likes of defense budgets, nuclear disasters, overall energy consumption and an entire country's import bill. It is often hard to quantify such large dollar amounts but when compared to the other \$491 billion items, you can get a real sense of the magnitude.

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