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By: Marius Oiaga, Technology News Editor

## [Panda Software Warns of Data Kidnapping](#)

*The ransom may be as high as \$300*



According to PandaLabs, Panda Software's malware analysis laboratory, the second quarter of 2006 has witnessed a 30% ransomware increase. PandaLabs has revealed in a press release examples of the increasing ransomware phenomenon. The use of malicious programs to encrypt user data and then demand a ransom in order to permit access to it has seen an explosion as the coding technology associated with the practice grows intensely more complex and the prices demanded can grow to as much as \$300. "One such example is Ransom.A, first detected on April 28. Once it has infected a computer, Ransom.A threatens to delete a random file every 30 minutes, until the victim pays the sum of US\$10.99. To avoid being traced, the blackmailer asks for the money to be paid via Western Union. Once payment has been received, users receive the code with which they can disable the Trojan and recover the files," stated PandaLabs. The security company also presented the example of Arhiveus, a piece of malware that demands the acquiring of products from an online drugstore in exchange of the hijacked files. Warning users that their kidnapped data is protected by a password longer than 30 characters acts as sufficient incentive to determine the transaction. "The infamous PGPCoder family of Trojans has undergone a radical transformation, now using RSA asymmetric key encryption. However, as new variants of this family have appeared, the key has become longer (some variants have been detected with 330 and 660-bit keys), making it increasingly difficult to decrypt kidnapped files," said PandaLabs.