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When buying a co-op, you're actually buying shares in a corporation that owns the building. Regardless of the owner's decision, potential buyers need the approval of the co-op board to close on the property. Structuring a written offer for a co-op unit can be a bit more complex than a traditional residential property offer. Sellers consider the offering price but also look for a buyer who can make it past the board to the closing table. Hire a qualified real estate agent who has experience in your local co-op market. She can research comparable sales in the building and surrounding area and help you arrive at an appropriate offering price. She also can help you meet the financial requirements necessary to buy a co-op by connecting you with lenders who finance such sales. Get preapproved for a mortgage. You can bolster your offer by including a preapproval letter from your lender stating you're in good financial standing and can afford the sale price and down payment. Like other real estate offers, co-op boards won't consider an offer without a mortgage preapproval letter. Draw up a sales contract to buy the co-op unit. Real estate agents use boilerplate sales contract forms that comply with state and local laws, so you don't need to draft one on your own. The sales contract -- which serves as the offer -- should include the address of the property, an offering price and the terms and conditions of the purchase. Though not essential, including a financial statement may substantiate your offer and show the owners -- and the board -- that you meet the co-op's financial requirements to purchase. Present any contingencies. For example, if your ability to purchase the co-op is contingent on selling another property, this should be presented in the offer. Most commonly, offers include a mortgage contingency, meaning the offer is contingent upon the buyer gaining the loan underwriter's final approval. Submit your offer. Each time either party makes a change to the written offer, the other party has the option to accept it, reject it, or counter again. The document only becomes binding when both parties agree to the price and all contract terms. Originally posted on the Puppet blog, and republished here with Puppet's permission. You want to create a much closer working relationship between your IT operations team and the software development team. How do you do it? Here are a few highlights from Puppet's ebook, Get Started with DevOps: A Guide for IT Managers around fostering collaboration between teams and easing the transition. Collaboration over contract negotiation One of the tenets of the agile manifesto is "customer collaboration over contract negotiation." This also applies to the relationship between development and operations teams. Devote some time to helping the dev team; for example, instead of holding meetings to set some minimum performance measures, pair with the dev team to help them measure, and then improve, application performance. Pairing is a great way of starting collaboration across teams — and the dev team will likely be happy for the help. Security is a great icebreaker Ops teams have a healthy fear of real-world users and a good eye for security issues—for good reason. Developers are interested in security, but don't always have expertise in it. That's why security can be such a good place to start. Your ops team can offer internal training sessions on security, and invite developers into threat briefings. Show devs the monitoring data around malware or DOS attacks. By giving people common information, you'll help people appreciate each other's expertise and build relationships between the teams. Building self-service platforms It's increasingly common for operations teams to be internal service providers. Rather than having your ops team deploy everything, develop a standard way for developer to deploy their own applications. Rather than the ops team being the only people who have access to production monitoring, the team can instead maintain the monitoring system and provide self-service access and training to devs. This won't happen overnight. Start by identifying largely repetitive work that is ripe for standardization, and then design a service model around that activity. Repeat for other common activities. The shift to self-service will fundamentally change the relationship between Ops and Dev, from operators slowing developers down to operators empowering developers. You built it, you run it The best people to support a complex application are the people who built it. Help development monitor and support their applications. Once the development team knows they will be directly responsible for any problems in production, they are much more likely to make sure the software is operable, stable and resilient to failure. This doesn't mean traditional operations skills aren't needed. It might mean the team structures change, and that the organization moves towards cross-functional teams of developers and operators. Ops might also become a smaller services team for the entire organization, setting standards and offering their expertise and advice when needed. Managing change There are a few things you can do to help both your own operations team and the development team transition to the new way of doing things. Here are a few ideas: Developers often underestimate — or simply aren't aware of — the parts of operations and service management that aren't strictly about code deployment. The ops team can train developers on things like capacity planning, incident management or auditing requirements, preferably through pairing. Most people learn better by working with someone, and pairing is a great way to develop greater empathy between teams. Involve the development team in designing shared services — after all, what your operations team members want may not align with what the developers feel they need. Start by clearly defining user needs, and work out what's possible in the short term and medium term. Involving both teams should lead to a better service and a better understanding of the underlying problems and tradeoffs. Include developers in on-call rotations. The main benefit here is in aligning incentives; it's a lot harder to consider actually shipping software that has performance or stability problems if you know you're going to be called when things break. The above are just a few practical ideas you'll find in Get Started with DevOps: A Guide for IT Managers. Read it for more help in winning over your own operations team, the development team and executives to the DevOps way of working. Film is so last century. When it comes to cameras and your business, digital is where it's at. As a sign of the times, Nikon, following similar moves by Canon and Kodak, is stopping production on most of its film cameras. For entrepreneurs, that means it's time to start shopping for a digital camera. Even if you're already wise to the ways of digitcams, you may want to look into upgrading to a newer model. Prices are down, picture quality is way up, and the convenience is undeniable.You'll want to find a camera that fits your business needs, so take a moment to consider what you'll use it for the most. Are you making your own product brochures? Do you need to add product photos to your website? Do you need to send pictures of finished projects to your clients? Will you be printing 4-by-6-inch snapshots or making larger digital prints? Do you need images to upload to eBay? Chances are, you have multiple uses in mind. The largest-ever Android malware campaign may have duped as many as 5 million users into downloading infected apps from Google's Android Market, Symantec said today.Dubbed "Android Counterclank" by Symantec, the malware was packaged in 13 different apps from three different publishers, with titles ranging from "Sexy Girls Puzzle" to "Counter Strike Ground Force." Many of the infected apps were still available on the Android Market as of 3 p.m. ET Friday."They don't appear to be real publishers," Kevin Haley, a director with Symantec's security response team, said in an interview today. "These aren't rebundled apps, as we've seen so many times before."Haley was referring to a common tactic by Android malware makers to repackage a legitimate app with attack code, then re-release it to the marketplace in the hope that users will confuse the fake with the real deal.Symantec estimated the impact by combining the download totals -- which the Android Market shows as ranges -- of the 13 apps, arriving at a figure between 1 million on the low end and 5 million on the high. "Yes, this is the largest malware [outbreak] on the Android Market," said Haley.Android.Counterclank is a Trojan horse that when installed on an Android smartphone collects a wide range of information, including copies of the bookmarks and the handset maker. It also modifies the browser's home page. The hackers have monetized the malware by pushing unwanted advertisements to compromised Android phones.Although the infected apps request an uncommonly large number of privileges -- something that the user must approve -- Haley argued that few people bother reading them before giving their okay. "If you were the suspicious type, you might wonder why they're asking for permission to modify the browser or transmit GPS coordinates," said Haley. "But most people don't bother."Android.Counterclank is a minor variation on an older Android Trojan horse called Android.Tonclank that was discovered in June 2011.Some of the 13 apps that Symantec identified as infected have been on the Android Market for at least a month, according to the revision dates posted on the e-store. Symantec, however, discovered them only yesterday.Users had noticed something fishy before then. "The game is decent ... but every time you run this game, a 'search icon gets added randomly to one of your screens," said one user on Jan. 16 after downloading "Deal & Be Millionaire," one of the 13. "I keep deleting the icon, but it always reappears. If you tap the icon you get a page that looks suspiciously like the Google search page."Android users have hammered one of the infected apps with low review scores, calling it 'crap.'All 13 suspected apps are free for the downloading.Symantec's researchers have told Google of their discovery, said Haley. Google, however, did not immediately reply to questions and a request for confirmation on the security firm's claims.Haley said Symantec's researchers are still "peeling back the layers of the onion," and added that the company would publish more information on the threat as it unearthed details. "What's interesting here is that instead of taking legitimate apps, [malware authors] have created apps similar to legitimate ones," said Haley. "That, and the big numbers of downloads, of course." Symantec has published a list of the 13 infected apps on its website. Gregg Keizer covers Microsoft, security issues, Apple, Web browsers and general technology breaking news for Computerworld. Follow Gregg on Twitter at @gkeizer, on Google+ or subscribe to Gregg's RSS feed . His e-mail address is gkeizer@computerworld.com.See more articles by Gregg Keizer. Copyright © 2012 IDG Communications, Inc.