Hackers are selling access to hacked Corporate/Bank servers

by Ilya Khrennikov via sqizi - IOL *Saturday, Jun 18 2016, 11:59am*
international / prose / post

> *Russian hackers have a ten year lead on the rest of the world established in the very early days of computing, and as IT specialists are aware, closing that gap in skills is almost impossible. At the tail end of that Russian skill base a new economic model has emerged.*

Moscow - Cyber-security firm Kaspersky Lab says it has uncovered an online marketplace where criminals from all over the world sell access to more than 70 000 hacked corporate and government servers for as little as $6 each.

Kaspersky discovered the forum after a tip from a European internet service provider. The market, called xDedic, is operated by hackers, who are probably Russian speaking, that have ditched their traditional business model of just selling passwords and have graduated instead to earning a commission from each transaction on their black market.

"It's a marketplace similar to EBay where people can trade information about cracked servers," said Costin Raiu, head of global research at Kaspersky Lab. "The forum owners verify the quality of the hacked data and charge a commission of 5 percent for transactions."

An aerospace company from the US, oil firms from China and the United Arab Emirates, a chemical company from Singapore and banks from several different countries are among companies whose servers were compromised by xDedic, Kaspersky said, declining to disclose any names.

As businesses ranging from banks to retailers go digital, hacking is getting more advanced and is often instrumental to traditional crime. Markets offering criminals both the tools to hack into networks and the spoils of successful attacks such as credit card data are growing in size and complexity. US authorities worked with counterparts from more than a dozen other countries in 2015 to dismantle a sophisticated computer forum known as Darkode, described as an online, invitation-only market for cyber-criminals to buy and sell products for infecting electronic devices.

Cybercrime services allow even low-skilled criminals to use acquired malicious software to attack their targets, Kaspersky said. People who bought access to servers on xDedic used the information for denial-of-service attack on businesses or to steal credit-card details from servers connected to systems such as computer terminals in shops, according to Raiu. Some have used compromised servers to mine bitcoins, he said. The marketplace is available on the internet, requiring users to register and deposit $10 in bitcoins.

"It wasn't only government networks, but also corporations, banks, research institutions, telecommunication companies, to name a few," Raiu said.

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