

160 Million Credit Numbers Stolen by Small Computer Hacking Ring

July 26, 2013 - Four Russian nationals and a Ukrainian national have been indicted by the US Attorney's office in New Jersey for stealing 160 million credit and debit card numbers. They sold the numbers for between \$10 and \$50 each; racking up hundreds of millions of dollars in fraudulent charges. The cards were stolen by computer hackers over an eight year period. The hackers targeted specific companies in the United States, at least one French retailer, and various banks.

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})();
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The American retailers that were targeted included JC Penny, JetBlue and 7-Eleven. Payment processor, Heartland Payment Systems was also targeted.

The hacking operation was sophisticated and went undetected for years by some of the victims. It was launched in 2005. Of all the victims, Heartland Payment Systems was the most negatively impacted; suffering more than \$200 million in losses even though they had detected it and stopped the intrusion in 2008.

In a separate indictment, the five people involved in the credit card theft were charged with launching computer attacks against PNC Bank, Citibank and the NASDAQ stock exchange.

Of the five charged, two were arrested in the Netherlands last year and one of them has already been extradited to the United States for prosecution. The other three defendants remain at large. The five men were identified as Vladimir Drinkman, Aleksandr Kalinin, Roman Kotov and Dmitriy Smilianets of Russia and Mikhail Rytikov of Ukraine.

The defendant already in American custody, Dmitriy Smilianets, is expected to make his first court appearance next week.
by Jim Malmberg
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