

Hacking Attacks Target the Personally Identifiable Information of Police Officers & their families

December 21, 2011 - In what can only be described as a frightening scenario, hackers are actively attempting to steal the personally identifiable information of police officers and their families, and they have started posting that information on the internet. The hacker groups involved are publicly stating that the reason for their efforts is to take revenge on the police for forcefully evicting participants in the Occupy Wall Street movement that has spread across the country. It is a form of online thuggery. It is illegal. And it could get some cops or their families killed.

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var s = document.createElement('SCRIPT'), s1 = document.getElementsByTagName('SCRIPT')[0];  
s.type = 'text/javascript';  
s.src = 'http://widgets.digg.com/buttons.js';  
s1.parentNode.insertBefore(s, s1);  
})();
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(function() {  
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The widely publicized hacker group called Anonymous appears to have started this series of attacks. Last week, they published a wide variety of information belonging to thousands of police officers, including their physical addresses.

Now other hackers appear to have jumped on the bandwagon; targeting both government and commercial websites that store information on police offices. These individual hacking efforts have resulted in additional information being published on thousands of other officers.

What has the hackers so up in arms? Well, publicly they are saying that the attacks are retribution against police for evicting thousands of Occupy Wall Street participants from parks and public lands across the country. But the police are not policy makers. That role belongs to their superiors; normally elected politicians.

The hacker's actions are more than just troubling. They appear to think of themselves as vigilantes seeking justice. In actuality, they are criminals engaged in a cyber-bullying attack against the police. They are breaking numerous privacy laws and endangering the health and lives of both the police officers they are targeting and their family members.

These attacks are also worrisome because unless they are stopped quickly, and unless people are thrown in jail as a result of them, they may be a harbinger of things to come. No group of people should be able to engage in this type of activity with immunity from the law. If that is allowed, then anytime the government makes a decision that isn't overwhelmingly popular, we're likely to see more attacks of this kind.

One thing that these attacks clearly demonstrate is that the government remains incapable of protecting sensitive, personally identifiable information. The fact that they can't protect police officers should disturb everyone. Yet both the

federal and state governments continue to push for greater concentrations of personally identifiable information to be stored in online databases. The latest push is to force all Americans into an online medical database. This is something that everyone should oppose.

by Jim Malmberg

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