Is Your Chinese Computer Spying on You or Your Business?

October 24, 2016 - In light of recent state sponsored hacking against the United States, word of an internal report from the Pentagon's Joint Staff J-2 intelligence directorate got our attention. The report warns that the Pentagon should stop using products manufactured by Lenovo; one of the largest producers of personal computers worldwide.

Tweet

(function() {
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);
})();

(function() {
var po = document.createElement('script'); po.type = 'text/javascript'; po.async = true;
po.src = 'https://apis.google.com/js/plusone.js';
var s = document.getElementsByTagName('script')[0]; s.parentNode.insertBefore(po, s);
})();

J-2 officials are concerned that Lenovo could be providing hardware and firmware on the computers that allows the company and the Chinese government to conduct espionage against the United States. If true, there is no reason to believe that they couldn't be used to conduct corporate espionage or massive data breaches leading to identity theft as well.

We have good reason to be concerned about these things. It is believed that Chinese hackers were responsible for the massive data breach at the federal government's Office of Personnel Management. That breach was responsible for exposing the personally identifiable information on millions of current and former federal employees. More importantly, it exposed biometric information millions of people with security clearances.

It should also be noted that two thirds of all counterfeit products worldwide are made in China. This means that anyone who is storing intellectual property on a computer made in China could be putting that information at risk for theft and eventual counterfeiting.

The J-2 report explicitly states that there have been instances when Lenovo computers have been found "beaconing." For lack of a better explanation, this means that the computers were clandestinely attempting to "phone home;" presumably to deliver information about data that was stored on the computers.

You can read more about the J-2 report and its implications for the Pentagon here. The bottom line is that if you are running a business, buying cheap Chinese computers could be the most expensive mistake you'll ever make. And for individuals, buying one of these computers could mean that you are putting yourself at much higher risk for fraud and identity theft. Our recommendation is, "Don't do it!"
byJim Malmberg
Note: When posting a comment, please sign-in first if you want a response. If you are not registered, click here. Registration is easy and free.
Follow me on Twitter:

Follow ACCESS