



## Cyberattack bogs down Web sites

Published: July 8, 2009 at 7:55 AM

A cyberattack during the last few days targeted Web sites run by major U.S. government departments and agencies, several computer security researchers said.

The broad and coordinated attack involved thousands of computers worldwide infected with malicious software that instructed them to repeatedly try to access the targeted sites, a tactic designed to render the targeted sites inaccessible to legitimate users, The Washington Post reported Wednesday.

Some of the targeted sites were run by the departments of Homeland Security and Defense, the Federal Aviation Administration and the Federal Trade Commission, officials said.

The attacks, first reported Tuesday, did not penetrate the targeted sites and no data was stolen, officials said.

Homeland Security officials were aware of the attacks, department spokeswoman Amy Kudwa said, and the government's Computer Emergency Response Team issued guidance to public and private sector Web sites to counter the attacks.

"We see attacks on federal networks every day, and measures in place have minimized the impact to federal Web sites," Kudwa said.

Another government official familiar with the situation told the Post the attack seemed well-organized.

"There are a lot of computers involved," the official said. "What we don't know is who is orchestrating it."

Researchers said 26 Web sites were targeted, including those run by government agencies and several commercial entities, such as Nasdaq, the New York Stock Exchange and The Washington Post.

Another security researcher said at least 60,000 infected computers overwhelmed the targeted Web sites. The greatest number of infected systems appeared to be located in South Korea, the researcher said.

© 2009 United Press International, Inc. All Rights Reserved.