

Internet Attacks Increase in Number, Severity

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Virus-laden e-mail and criminal-driven security have increased 50 percent in the first half of 2005, according to a recent IBM report. Customized attacks on government, financial services, manufacturing and healthcare Latest News about healthcare also have seen significant increases.

IBM's Global Business Security Index, which tracks worldwide security trends, indicated there is not only a decrease in less profitable threats like spam and computer viruses, but also an increase in attacks involving money, such as data theft or identity theft.

According to the report, there were more than 237 million overall security attacks in the first half of the year. The government was the most targeted sector, with over 54 million attacks leveled at government agencies. Manufacturing came in second place with over 36 million attacks.

Money Motivated

A particularly notable trend is the number of attacks that are directed at specific individuals or companies, often with financial, competitive, political or social motivations behind them.

These targeted threats, sometimes call "spear phishing," are coordinated attacks typically launched to extract critical data from an organization. This type of threat has increased more than tenfold since January, IBM reported.

In December 2004, one in every 52 e-mails was infected by some sort of malicious security threat, the report noted. By June 2005, that ratio had changed to one in every 28 e-mails.

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