

Expert Says U.S. In 'Real Trouble' Due to Cyber Warfare

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Author and Cyber Warfare expert Andrew Colarik is warning that the U.S. "is in real trouble," due to its vulnerabilities to cyber warfare, which are attacks on electronic infrastructure using computers.

"...breaches have occurred at some of the largest credit, banking and medical corporations in the country," Colarik explains as he discusses the success hackers are having in gaining access to some of America's most critical institutions. "Add to these breaches that have occurred through governmental agencies and it becomes apparent that our personal information has become both a commodity for business and cyber criminals alike."

The use of cyber warfare recently gained more attention in May 2007 when the country of Estonia faced a giant cyber attack on web sites for government and private institutions, including banks and media outlets. The attacks occurred after Estonia removed a memorial dedicated to the Soviet military, eliciting condemnation from Russia. The "denial-of-service" attacks overwhelmed Estonian servers, effectively disabling them.

When the highly sophisticated cyber attacks were found to come from Russian computer servers owned by the government, Estonia accused Russia of being behind the attacks, although Russia denied this.

Despite this event and other security breaches, Colarik warned that the U.S. is failing to respond effectively. He says that because there's no immediate loss, such as in a typical theft, it doesn't raise enough alarm to wake the country up to the threat.

"Without an appropriate response, those charged with protecting personal information have little disincentive to do a proper job," he said. As America has failed to respond, other countries such as Russia, China, and others, have been furthering their capabilities. If American defenses are indeed vulnerable, these leaves America's infrastructure at risk of being hacked into and shut down by an adversary.

"[We are at risk of] seeing a future where we are transformed periodically into a third-world country by means of digital attacks," Colarik said.