

China says it's not behind Google email hacking

June 2 2011



In this July 17, 2006 file photo, Google workers walk by a Google sign at company headquarters in Mountain View, Calif. Google says computer hackers in China broke into the Gmail accounts of several hundred people, including senior government officials in the U.S. and political activists. The attacks announced Wednesday, June 1, 2011 on Google's blog aren't believed to be tied to a more sophisticated assault originating from China in late 2009 and early last year. (AP Photo/Paul Sakuma, File)

(AP) -- China denied it supports hacking activities and said it is part of global efforts to combat computer security threats Thursday, a day after Google disclosed some of its email users suffered hacking attacks that originated within the country.

Google disclosed Wednesday that personal Gmail accounts of several hundred people, including senior U.S. [government officials](#), [military](#)

[personnel](#) and political activists, had been breached.

[Google](#) traced the origin of the attacks to Jinan, China, the home city of a military vocational school whose computers were linked to an assault 17 months ago on Google's systems.

China is firmly opposed to activities that [sabotage](#) Internet and computer security, including hacking, Foreign Ministry spokesman Hong Lei told reporters Thursday.

Hong said hacking was a global problem and Chinese networks had also been targeted by hackers, but he gave no specifics. He said China was working to crack down on the problem, but he didn't respond when asked whether it would investigate this specific incident.

"Allegations that the Chinese government supports hacking activities are completely unfounded and made with ulterior motives," Hong said.

Google said all of the hacking victims have been notified and their accounts have been secured.

This time around, the hackers appeared to rely on tactics commonly used to fool people into believing they are dealing with someone they know or a company that they trust. Once these "phishing" expeditions get the information needed to break into an email account, the access can be used to send messages that dupe other victims.

The latest attacks aren't believed to be tied to the more sophisticated assault last year. That intrusion targeted the Google's own security systems and triggered a high-profile battle with China's Communist government over online [censorship](#).

The tensions escalated amid reports that the [Chinese government](#) had at

least an indirect hand in the hacking attacks, a possibility that Google didn't rule out.

The previous break-in prompted Google to move its Chinese-language search engine off the mainland so it wouldn't have to censor content that the government didn't want the general public to see. The search engine is now based in Hong Kong, which isn't subject to Beijing's censorship rules.

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Citation: China says it's not behind Google email hacking (2011, June 2) retrieved 22 June 2024 from <https://phys.org/news/2011-06-china-google-email-hacking.html>

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