

SKorea: Alleged hacking attack hits Internet users

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(AP) -- The personal information of about 35 million Internet users in South Korea was stolen in an alleged hacking attack that originated in China, officials said Thursday.

Hackers purportedly attacked popular Internet and social media sites Nate and Cyworld earlier this week, stealing data such as social security numbers and email addresses, the Korea Communications Commission said in a statement.

The regulator said that operator of the sites, SK Communications, alleged the attack originated from computers in China based on their Internet Protocol addresses. IP addresses are the Web equivalent of a street address or phone number.

The stolen data included user IDs, passwords, social security numbers, names, mobile phone numbers and email addresses. Nate said the [social security numbers](#) and passwords are encrypted so that they are not available for illegal use.

South Korean police said Thursday they have started an investigation that could take several months.

[South Korea](#) has faced [Internet attacks](#) before, with blame frequently pinned on hackers operating from IP addresses in China. China has denied all charges of hacking in the past.

In May, South Korean prosecutors said that hackers in North Korea had broken into the [computer network](#) of a South Korean bank earlier this year. The prosecutors said software used in the hacking was similar to that used in a 2009 attack that paralyzed South Korean and U.S. websites.

[North Korea](#) has flatly denied any responsibility for the attacks.

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