

Quarter of US firms in China face data theft: lobby

March 29 2013



A woman in Beijing shops online at the Taobao website on February 5, 2008. Over a quarter of the members of a US business lobby in China have experienced data theft, the group said on Friday, after the two powers engaged in a war of words over state-sponsored hacking attacks.

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An American Chamber of Commerce in China survey of its members found 26 percent of respondents said "proprietary data or trade secrets have been breached or stolen from their China operations".

Data theft "poses a substantial obstacle for businesses in China", the Chamber said in a report.

Most businesses said the threat of data theft was "rising or staying the same", threatening the development of cloud computing, an [emerging technology](#) which has received a major push from the Chinese government, the report said.

Beijing's foreign ministry, which has repeatedly denied that China engages in hacking, dismissed the report, with spokesman Hong Lei saying: "We oppose the presumption of guilt, without thorough investigation and solid evidence."

He called on the US to stop "politicising the trade issue, and hyping cybersecurity issues".

The report follows a war of words between the world's two largest economies over cyber-attacks, after a US research company said last month that a Chinese army unit had stolen "hundreds of terabytes" of data, from mostly US firms.

China dismissed the report as "groundless" and said its [defence ministry](#) websites were often subject to regular hacking attacks originating in the US.

It also labelled as "biased" a US bill blocking government purchases of information technology equipment "produced, manufactured or assembled" by firms "owned, directed or subsidised by the People's Republic of [China](#)".

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Citation: Quarter of US firms in China face data theft: lobby (2013, March 29) retrieved 11 May 2024 from <https://phys.org/news/2013-03-quarter-firms-china-theft-lobby.html>

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