

Cyberattack targets The Seattle Times website

March 31 2015, by Matt Day, The Seattle Times

A cyberattack took down The Seattle Times website for about 90 minutes Monday morning.

Seattletimes.com was unavailable from about 8 a.m. to 9:30 a.m. as a result of a denial-of-service attack, company spokeswoman Jill Mackie said.

"The Seattle Times [website](#) experienced technical problems Monday morning due to an external attack that appears to have targeted other sites," Mackie said in a statement. "We continue to monitor the situation and apologize for any inconvenience this caused readers."

Denial-of-service attacks are designed to flood a website with requests, essentially overwhelming the site's servers and preventing it from responding to other users. The result is a site that grinds to a halt or runs so slowly that it becomes unusable.

Such attacks on their own aren't designed to damage a target's computer systems or steal files. The attacks, a fixture of Internet security threats for decades, have been blamed on culprits ranging from political operatives to young, tech-savvy hackers connected by social media.

The ease with which such attacks could be orchestrated was illustrated in 2000 when a 15-year-old Canadian boy, working under the alias "Mafiaboy," was able to temporarily bring down the websites of Yahoo, CNN and Amazon.com, among others.

Mackie said The Seattle Times' information technology staff believes Monday's attack on the website was carried out by a cyberattack group that calls itself Vikingdom2015. The group is said to have targeted several government and media websites, including those of the Indiana state government and the Bangor (Maine) Daily News, with denial-of-service [attacks](#).

IBM security researchers said the group was formed from former members of the Team Cyber Poison hacker group, and began attacking websites this month.

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