

# Philippines arrests alleged election website hacker

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Philippine officials said Thursday they have arrested a suspect in the hacking of the national election agency's website ahead of next month's presidential polls.

The 23-year-old male suspect, who was arrested in Manila on Wednesday, told police he merely defaced the site to expose its vulnerability to potential breaches, they said.

An internet security firm has described the March 27 incident as potentially the world's biggest government-related data breach, but officials said they had yet to verify if the released information had come from the Commission on Elections database.

"He said he had no intention to harm. We got the computer he used so our forensic examination on the extent of the breach is ongoing," Ronald Aguto, head of the National Bureau of Investigation's [cybercrime unit](#) told reporters.

Commission on Elections spokesman James Jimenez told AFP the website was both defaced and data was copied, though the agency was still checking if the data dump was an accurate copy of its records.

"There are birthdays, ages, passport information. If it's a faithful copy, they just had access to a bunch of this information but this is publicly accessible in general. Birthdays can be searched," Jimenez said.

Commission head Andres Bautista said other features of the election agency website, such as one that allowed voters to search the precinct where they would cast their votes, have been disrupted.

The commission said the hack would not affect the conduct of the May 9 vote to elect President Benigno's successor as well as fill thousands of other political posts.

Two other suspects whom the young man described as people he met on social media are being sought, Aguto said, adding the detained suspect would be charged with violating the country's anti-cybercrime law.

Aguto described the suspect as a recent graduate from an information technology course and a Manila resident.

The security firm Trend Micro had said the hack could surpass the data breach of 20 million US citizens in 2015.

It said it feared cyber-criminals could use the data to commit identity theft or extortion.

A Facebook account by an entity calling itself Lulzsec Philippines boasted that a copy of the voter database was made available online.

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