

Sony Ericsson's Canada site hacked: company

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A visitor to a consumer telecommunications fair checks a mobile phone. Hackers have attacked Sony Ericsson's Canadian eShop website, affecting 2,000 users, the latest online strike against the Japanese electronics and entertainment giant, a Sony spokesman said Wednesday.

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The new security breach follows the theft of personal data since last month from its PlayStation Network, Sony Online Entertainment and Qriocity services, including names, passwords and addresses from more than 100 million accounts.

In further attacks this week, Sony said on Tuesday that 8,500 Greek user accounts had been compromised and its sites hit in Thailand and Indonesia.

The company said Monday that data breaches will result in at least a \$170 million hit in known costs to operating profit this financial year.

"This is an ongoing problem, and the size of the damage is still unclear," Ryosuke Katsura, senior analyst at Mizuho Securities, told AFP.

"The market is expecting that Sony may need to pay compensation to affected customers. Concerns also linger that the size of the damage may be larger than currently expected if they file lawsuits against the company."

Sony's share price dropped 1.49 percent to 2,236 yen in Tokyo Wednesday.

Katsura added that "the ongoing problem is expected to put a drag on Sony between six months and a year, but if the company takes it as a lesson and reinforces its systems, it would be rather positive for its growth from 2013."

The most recent attack -- targeting the mobile telephone joint venture between Sony and Sweden's Ericsson -- was discovered on Tuesday local time, and the affected website was shut down, a Sony spokesman told AFP.

"Sony Ericsson's website in Canada, which advertises its products, has been hacked, affecting 2,000 people," he told AFP.

"Their personal information was posted on a website called 'The Hacker News'. The information includes registered names, email addresses and encrypted passwords. But it does not include credit card information."

The link to the Sony Ericsson eShop site featured a message that said "D'oh! The page you are looking for has gone walkabout. Sorry."

The series of breaches has damaged Sony's brand image and undermined its efforts to link its gadgets to an online "cloud-based" network of games, movies and music that relies on consumer confidence in their security.

On Monday Sony said it expected to post a \$3.2 billion dollar net loss for the fiscal year ended March as it tries to recover from the impact of the

March 11 earthquake and tsunami, which ravaged production and damaged facilities.

It said the data breach will result in at least a \$170 million hit in "currently known costs" to operating profit this financial year in terms of insurance and damages, but that it anticipated further costs.

Sony has said it plans to fully restore PlayStation Network and Qriocity services by the end of the month.

Sony CEO Howard Stringer has apologised in a letter to customers and said the company is "working with the FBI and other law enforcement agencies around the world to apprehend those responsible".

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