

Australian Prime Minister Hacked

Written by ph0bYx

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Computers belonging to the Australian prime minister and at least nine other federal ministers were recently hacked, according to a news report.

Besides Prime Minister Julia Gillard, Foreign Minister Kevin Rudd and Defense Minister Stephen Smith were also targeted.

Several thousand e-mails were accessed by the intruders beginning in February, before Australian authorities were tipped off to the breach by U.S. intelligence officials at the CIA and FBI, [according to the Daily Telegraph](#).

The attack reportedly targeted the e-mail system for Australia's Parliament House, which is used for nonsensitive communications among parliament members. Ministers use a more secure departmental network for more sensitive communications, according to the paper.

Hackers also [recently struck Canadian government computers](#). That attack reportedly involved more-sensitive systems, allowing the attackers to access highly classified information, according to the CBC News. The hackers breached systems belonging to the Finance Department and Treasury Board as well as Defence Research and Development Canada, which conducts scientific and technological research for the Department of National Defence.

The intruders gained access through a spear-phishing attack that targeted top federal officials, then used their computers to send e-mail to IT staffers to trick them into revealing login credentials to gain a foothold on government networks.

As is the case in most of these types of hacks, fingers point to China as the culprit, even though attribution is generally difficult if not impossible to determine in a remote hack attack.

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