

Counterintelligence Report Finds Increased Attempts to Hack Sensitive/Classified Information

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The Defense Security Service (DSS) Counterintelligence Directorate recently issued its most recent “Targeting U.S. Technologies: A Trend Analysis of Cleared Industry Reporting” publication. This report analyzes suspicious contact reports from cleared companies that DSS received in fiscal year 2014. Such annual reporting helps improve a cleared company’s awareness of who instigated a hacking attempt, where it came from, the purpose of the attempt, and the method used. Increased knowledge from these reports also enables cleared companies to better identify and prevent future illicit contact.

Notably, 2014 saw an 8% increase in reported foreign collection attempts to obtain sensitive/classified information or technology regarding electronics, aeronautics, and command, control, communication & computer systems. Actors based in East Asia and the Pacific and the Near East regions were the primary reported collectors of such information. Actors in these regions, utilizing a variety of methods to obtain the sensitive/classified information or technology, frequently used the “academic solicitation” tactic (*e.g.*, leveraging placement in academic positions in order to facilitate collection efforts against emerging U.S. Department of Defense and civilian technical research) – a trend that will likely continue to persist in the future.

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