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Focus again falls on online retail security following eBay breach

Posted on:25/05/2014

By Martin Kovacs

Online retail security is again in the spotlight following last week's revelations eBay was the target of a cyberattack carried out between late February and early March this year in which a database containing customer information was compromised.

Releasing details of the attack, eBay urged its 145 million global users to change their passwords, stating the database contained encrypted passwords, email

addresses, physical addresses, phone numbers and dates of birth.

John Debrincat, managing director and CEO of Australian secure eCommerce solutions provider eComer, stated it appears hackers accessed the database by carefully crafting and then sending an email to a number of people within eBay, who then opened it.

"It seems like they've tied it down to the fact that it was a small group of people on their own staff that got a phishing email that led to some malicious software being installed in their servers," he commented.

"So, it's one of the scary things that people in an organisation, who are inside behind the firewall, if they open an email that's got a malicious piece of software attached to it ... the attacker doesn't need to penetrate the firewall to get into the system."

Debrincat stated it is unclear why it took eBay so long to make a statement, noting this has not thus far been addressed by eBay.

He did, however, note if the hacker was trying to hack through the firewall it would leave a much different trace, stating "it's much more obvious sometimes to see that that's happened than coming in from behind the firewall".

It is not the first time hackers have employed such means of access, Debrincat added, noting it generally happens with larger corporations, with hackers preying on people's routines.

In the case of eBay, Debrincat speculated the hacker "probably knew who these people were, knew what their habits were, and probably preyed on their habits".

"The security measures that guys like eBay have, I think are probably very strong," he commented. "I think the key thing to consider is that it comes back down to individuals, and not systems, to be alert."

Organisations and individuals need to be aware of their habits, he added, right down to the most basic details, such as opening seeming innocuous emails.

"For merchants who run online stores, their first line of defence should be what they're doing internally themselves - which emails do they open, do they have their core systems on the same network that they use for their own email and their own internet surfing?" Debrincat stated.

"That's where I think the learning curve has got to come here - it's not just about stronger systems, because they are getting stronger all the time, but it's about how you use and consider those systems, and what you, both as a consumer and a merchant, think about your own security."



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Breaking News

Samsung initiates exclusive scheme for UK indies



Posted on:04/07/2014

UK: Samsung has launched the Home Innovation Partners (HIPs) scheme to support UK independents and improve their access to and supply of Samsung home appliance products.

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Olympus' Tizzone moves onto IDEA board



Posted on:04/07/2014

IDEA Australia (the Imaging & Digital Entertainment Association) has elected Olympus Imaging Australia, General Manager Joe Tizzone as a new Director effective immediately. Tizzone will also assume the position of Vice President, Consumer.

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Colourful US appliance character passes



Posted on:04/07/2014

US: Oliver L. "Ollie" Fretter, the colorful founder and president of the old Fretter appliance and electronics store chain whose zany commercials endeared him to a generation of US television viewers, died Sunday at his home in Bloomfield Hills. He was 91.

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Department stores hit hard by spending collapse



Posted on:04/07/2014

A collapse in consumer sentiment following the budget has led to a sharp decline in discretionary spending according to the Australian Bureau of Statistics (ABS). Its figures indicated that retail sales fell by a seasonally adjusted 0.5% in May compared to April, the biggest decline in 13 months, while April's figure was also revised down to a decline of 0.1% , the first fall in 11 months.

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Extraordinary growth for wearable devices despite recall



Posted on:03/07/2014

Research firm IHS expects annual shipments of all types of wearable electronic devices to reach 56 million units by 2018. In fact, it expects the global market for just the batteries that go into wearable electronics to grow tenfold in four years.

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Class action against Electrolux dryer-fire settles



Posted on:03/07/2014

US: Electrolux Home Products has agreed to settle a class action lawsuit regarding fires alleged to have started in some models of its clothes dryers. Electrolux denied that the dryers were defective and agreed to the settlement to avoid further litigation.

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Australia one of the world's most connected countries



Posted on:02/07/2014

A new report from global research consultancy TNS has found Australia is one of the most connected countries in the world, with Australians on average owning 4.8 devices and spending 3.3 hours a day online on personal interests, such as browsing, shopping, and entertainment, compared to 2.2 hours watching TV.

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Samsung unveils compact Galaxy S5 mini



Posted on:02/07/2014

Samsung has taken the wraps off its Galaxy S5 mini, a compact version of its flagship Galaxy S5 smartphone.

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July Aussie launch for Nokia Lumia 930 and 635



Posted on:01/07/2014

Microsoft Devices is launching its new flagship Nokia Lumia 930 in Australia this month along with its Nokia Lumia 635, both running on the Windows Phone 8.1 operating system.

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