

Chinese hackers target US Government

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Hackers based in China have been attacking the US department of commerce.

The department was forced to take hundreds of computers off its network as the bureau of industry and security (BIS) was targeted.

Department spokesman Richard Mills explained that the BIS "took a series of immediate action steps to ensure that no data is compromised".

As a result staff have been stopped from accessing the internet on their own computers and workstations have had to be junked and replaced, as it is feared they could be infected with software tools designed to hide hackers' files and processes.

Mr Mills said: "We will be setting up a new clean system with new clean hardware."

Although details of the attacks have not been released, it was disclosed that some of the URLs were registered to Chinese internet service providers.

In July, the US state department also came under attack from Chinese hackers.

It is thought that the attacks represent a sea change in hacking behaviour. Instead of aiming to cause chaos to IT systems, hackers are increasingly trying to use their skills to get hold of sensitive information.