



COUNTY OF LOS ANGELES

CHIEF INFORMATION OFFICE

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July 7, 2003

To: Supervisor Yvonne Brathwaite Burke, Chair
Supervisor Gloria Molina
Supervisor Zev Yaroslavsky
Supervisor Don Knabe
Supervisor Michael D. Antonovich

From: Jon W. Fullinwider
Chief Information Officer

Subject: **HACKER ATTEMPTS TO BREACH WEB SITES**

The County was notified late last week about potential attempts to breach corporate, government and other organizational web sites. The highlighted initiative was to be performed under the guise of a contest to see which hacker could gain access to and deface web sites. The contest was to be conducted over the 4th of July weekend with the hacking attempts to occur on Sunday, July 6, 2003.

In response to this threat, the County's Chief Information Security Officer (CISO) called a meeting of all departmental information security officers and briefed them for the purposes of coordinating a comprehensive response in the event of an attack against County web assets. Additionally, the ISD Network Control Center was placed on alert and steps were taken to tighten down our network security utilizing security tools recently acquired. While difficult to ascertain if the County actually came under attack, these actions combined with departmental follow-through revealed that as of noon today, no defacement of County web sites had been accomplished. As noted in today's *Los Angeles Times* (attached), not all business organizations were as fortunate.

With the Board's support, over the last 18 months, we have taken significant steps to improve and formalize the manner in which the County communicates, coordinates and responds to cyber events. A comprehensive set of security policies have been developed and are currently in review. These policies will be presented to your Board for approval within the next few months. Given the dependence the County places on its information technology-based systems, information security and security awareness by all employees will be crucial as more emphasis is placed on technology in improving departmental operations and in the continuing use of technology for the delivery of County services.

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I would like to commend the CISO, ISD and departmental staff for taking proactive steps to prepare for and mitigate the unauthorized access and defacement of County web assets.

JWF:ygd

Attachment

c: David E. Janssen, Chief Administrative Officer
Dave Lambertson, Interim Director, ISD
Al Brusewitz, Chief Information Security Officer, CIO
Mark Gascoigne, General Manager, ISD/ITS
Departmental Information Security Officers

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Hundreds of Sites Breached by Competing Web Hackers

From Associated Press

A battle among hackers erupted on the Internet on Sunday as some factions disrupted a loosely coordinated "contest" among other groups trying to vandalize thousands of Web sites around the world.

Unknown attackers for hours knocked offline an independent security Web site, zone-h.org, that was verifying reports of online vandalism and being used by hackers to tally points for the competition. U.S. government and private technology experts warned last week that such vandalism was likely.

By late Sunday afternoon, hackers claimed responsibility for vandalizing hundreds of mostly obscure Web sites, such as ones for Security Title Co. and the Heart of Montana Realty Services, both of Bozeman, Mont.

There were no reports of vandalism involving flagship Internet sites that most consumers would recognize, a testament to improved online security over the last decade inside large corporations, government agencies and organizations.

"We at least knew it was coming," said Peter Allor of Internet Security Systems Inc., which distributed a warning Wednesday about the contest using an alert system for technology companies. "We took some efforts to harden our sites."