

SERIOUS ATTACK ON INTERNET ROOT SERVERS HIGHLIGHTS BUSINESS VULNERABILITY TO DDoS ATTACK, SAYS IAN KILPATRICK, MANAGING DIRECTOR OF WICK HILL GROUP

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Last Monday, the 21st October, saw a concerted DDoS (distributed denial of service) attack on the Internet which temporarily disabled seven of its thirteen root servers. Ian Kilpatrick, managing director of Wick Hill Group, distributor for WebScreen Technology's leading anti DDoS solutions, commented: "This is yet another example of the size and prevalence of DDOS attacks. It's truly astonishing that most UK businesses haven't bothered to deploy effective defences, relying instead on shutting down their own sites if attacked."

You may think the chances of a DDoS attack striking your business are remote, but they're not. According to WebScreen Technology, a third of all UK businesses will suffer a (DDoS) attack on their web servers during 2002, costing £54 million in lost on-line revenues. The effects of a DDoS attack can be extremely serious. ISP Cloud Nine had to close down after DDoS attacks at the beginning of 2002 made it unable to carry on trading.

Kilpatrick warns also that regular, smaller DDoS attacks can cause serious performance degradation to ebusiness networks. "Such background attacks are extremely common," he said, "but unless you're monitoring for them you will probably be blissfully unaware that they are happening. They are regularly misidentified as ISP or Internet performance problems."

According to Kilpatrick, this same ignorance means that businesses are often loathe to spend the small sums involved in protection. This is despite the availability of relatively inexpensive, and easy to use tools such as the WebScreen range, which will protect from major and minor DDoS attacks and allow businesses to carry on trading normally even when an attack is happening. The WebScreen range costs from only £5,000, a fraction of the cost of a serious attack. The range is available through Wick Hill resellers.

Distributed Denial of Service attacks

To launch a DDoS attack, a hacker often uses easily Internet downloadable kits to break into any number of Internet-connected computers and covertly installs a piece of attack software on them turning the PC into a so called zombie. The software (on hundreds, if not thousands of zombie computers) is then remotely activated to connect to the target web server sending bogus packets of traffic thousands of times a minute.

The target web server is flooded with this barrage of spurious traffic, overwhelming its infrastructure, exhausting its bandwidth, router processing capacity or network stack resources and ultimately making it crash and so denying service.

About Wick Hill

Wick Hill specialises in infrastructure solutions for e-business. Its range of solutions covers the areas of web access, web management, web services and web security. Through associations with a number of international partners, Wick Hill (a value added distributor) sources and delivers best-of-breed, easy-to-use solutions backed up by customer support, implementation, training and technical services. Wick Hill was established in 1976 and has offices in the UK and Germany.

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<http://www.wickhill.com> Pics of Ian Kilpatrick can be downloaded from <http://www.prshots.com/wickhill> or contact Annabelle Brown.