Open-Source Intelligence in Online Stolen Data Markets: Assessment of Network Disruption Strategies

Little is known about the scale and scope of online stolen data markets, including how these markets operate, and the actors involved in these operations. As governments, businesses, and consumers increasingly move to the internet to manage their finances and operations, parallel increases in the number of data breaches and hacking incidents have emerged. Absent data on online stolen data markets, one of the main challenges facing researchers and policy markets is how to effectively respond to and disrupt these emerging illicit markets.

A CINA team at Georgia State University conducted research to study trends in criminal activity on dark web criminal public sites. The project fills critical knowledge gaps in the study of online stolen data markets by shedding light on the ways in which actors in online market emerge and evolve over time, how they structure their operations, and their resilience to disruption.

This project advances our understanding of criminal activity on the dark web and provides investigators with insight into emerging trends of dark web activities, including how these markets respond to potential disruption strategies.

The project team has compiled and analyzed a longitudinal, anonymized dataset collected from public, online stolen data marketplaces over an eight-month period. To request more information on data collection and parsing tools developed and used by the team, and data analyses in the study, please contact cina@gmu.edu.

Research Products:

Publications:

The network of online stolen data markets: How vendor flows connect digital marketplaces

Final Report: “Open Source Intelligence in Online Stolen Data Markets: Assessment of Network Disruption Strategies