

INCREASINGLY SOPHISTICATED CYBER CRIMES: THE NUMBER OF SUCCESSFUL ATTACKS RISE

According to Exprivia's Cybersecurity Observatory, between July and September, network incidents increased, particularly for the Software/Hardware, Finance and PA sectors. Privacy breaches increased by 40% compared to the second quarter of the year. Data theft is the most frequent offence, while cash demands are increasing.

12 November 2021. Cyber incidents, namely successful cyber attacks, causing damage to institutions, companies and private citizens, are constantly increasing in Italy. These are the findings of the latest **Report on cyber threats of Exprivia's Cybersecurity Observatory**, presented today at the **Apulia Cybersecurity Forum** at the office of the Spegea business school in Bari, which - between July and September 2021 - recorded 273 phenomena, including attacks, incidents and privacy breaches.

Overall, the phenomena are slightly reduced (-2.5%) compared to the previous quarter, but the techniques used by cyber criminals, constantly evolving, led to 93 incidents. The number of attacks stands at 166, while there were 14 privacy breaches. For the latter, up by 40% compared to the previous quarter, the Data Protection Supervisory Authority issued fines of approximately seven million Euros, mainly due to omitted or entirely non-existent privacy policy and the illegal use of personal data.

*"We must still keep our guard up in defence of the network – comments **Domenico Raguseo, Exprivia Cybersecurity Director** – as the ratio between incidents and attacks is increasing rapidly across Italy. Compared to the first quarter of the year, in fact, when 7% of the attacks were successful, between July and September this figure reached 56%, causing increasingly serious and irreparable damage. Therefore, the analysis reveals that, on one side, attackers are using increasingly sophisticated techniques and, on the other, that incidents can occur even months after attacks, making systems vulnerable for quite some time".*

According to the Exprivia Observatory, which considers 95 public sources, in the third quarter of 2021 the sector recording the highest number of incidents is that of **Software/Hardware (34 episodes)**, therefore companies in the field of ICT, digital services, e-commerce platforms, devices and operating systems, which mainly suffer **thefts of data**, such as access credentials or sensitive information. Next in line comes the **Finance** sector – from banks to insurance companies, to cryptocurrency platforms - with **19 cases**, where, in addition to the theft of data of credit cards or



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access to bank accounts, an increase is recorded in **cash demands**. In the **Public Administration** sector, on the other hand, **14 incidents** were recorded, which mainly led to 'service interruptions', namely the interruption of the information systems, blocking the operations of public offices.

While, on one side, criminals are becoming increasingly cunning by refining their techniques, on the other, the great work done to spread a culture of cyber security - in the spotlight since the start of the pandemic - is beginning to bear fruit. In fact, there was a 19% decrease **compared to the previous quarter in the use of phishing techniques**: people are paying more attention to those methods of enticement by way of misleading emails or on social networks. On the other hand, a **significant increase (+22%) is recorded in the use of malware** as an attack method to steal sensitive information, mainly by spying on users' banking activities.



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