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Using Babel Street to Protect Employees from Digital/Cyber Threats

Historically, corporate security operations have protected executives, employees, and businesses from physical harm. But what can corporate security teams do when employees aren't victims anymore, but unwitting weapons used by criminals to steal proprietary or confidential data?

Cyber attackers use sophisticated techniques and social engineering to trick executives and employees into revealing personal information and credentials, then use that information to steal or ransom corporate data.

BECs, spear fishing, and more

Corporate security teams need comprehensive strategies for thwarting an array of digital crimes. These include business email compromise (BEC) attacks where criminals send employees emails, IMs, or other communications doctored to look as though they come from a corporate executive. The goal is to coerce employees into providing sensitive information to the attacker, or to provide the attacker with access to corporate systems. In spear fishing attacks, criminals study a subject's online posts and profiles to increase their credibility when approaching a mark. Ransomware attacks are also a significant concern.

Using Babel Street to spot cybercriminals

Babel Street solutions can help corporate security teams spot and mitigate digital threats. Here are steps a security team could take to investigate persistent cyber espionage by Iranian-backed hacking groups such as Charming Kitten, PHOSPHORUS, Yello Garuda, APT35, and APT42.[1]

Investigate phishing attempts

Hackers masquerade as a legitimate person from an institution to build rapport with their desired target. The "Join Us" link in the email in Figure 1 would likely go to an innocuous site where hackers would attempt to collect further information before sending any malicious links. However, any phishing link could be dangerous. Cybersecurity teams can use Babel Street Secure Access to create an isolated virtual environment in which to test potentially malicious links without exposing systems or networks to hackers.

Research hacker techniques

When known hacking groups are suspected, cybersecurity teams can conduct searches using Babel Street Insights to better understand the group's methods. First, the team can identify variants of the group's names and potential connections with other groups.

Figure 1: A phishing email posing as an invitation from a known UK media outlet

Then, conducting searches with filters such as sources, document types, and date ranges can help reveal hackers' previously used tactics, techniques, procedures, and targets.

Figure 3 shows how the Iranian-backed hacking groups APT35 and APT42 target corporate, academic, journalist, NGOs and personal email accounts with spear phishing campaigns.

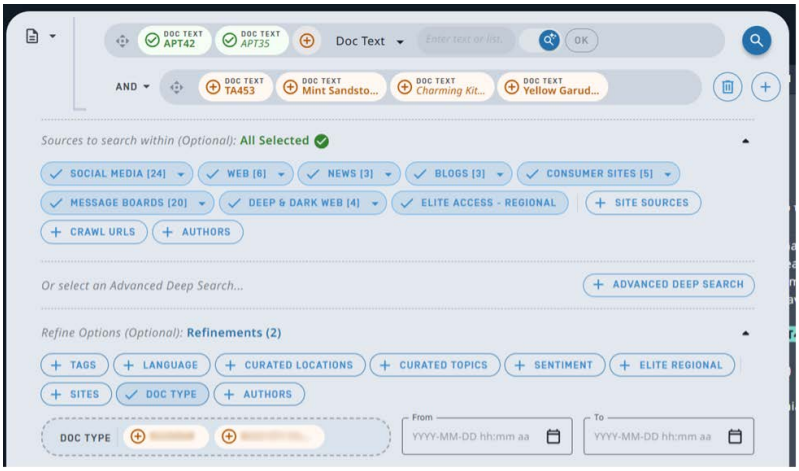

Figure 2: An Insights dark web search to identify other variations of the Apt42 hacker group

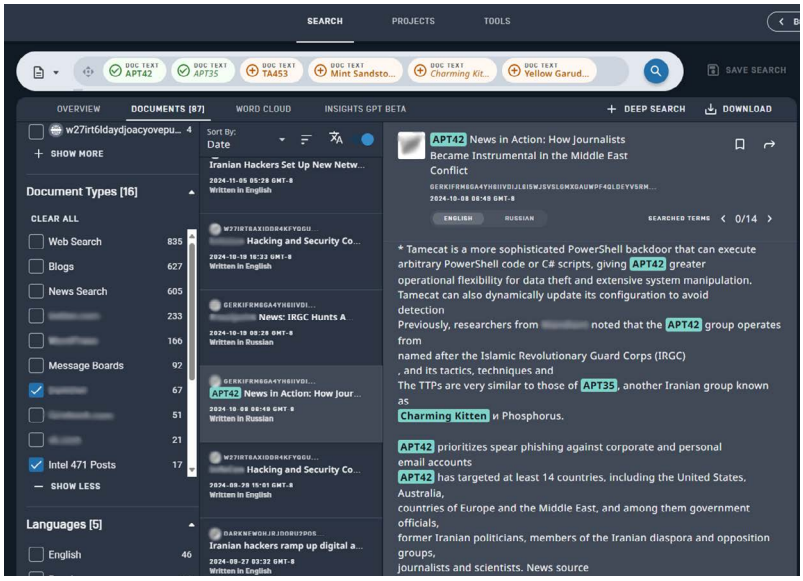

Figure 3: Search results yield insights into hacker techniques

When it comes to protecting employees and intellectual property from hacking attempts, knowledge is power. In this case, cybersecurity teams with a deeper understanding of state-backed hacking can better educate employees on how to resist these attacks.

Endnotes

[1] Rozmann, Ofir; Koksal, Asli, et. al., "Uncharmed: Untangling Iran's APT42 Operations" May 1, 2024, https://cloud.google.com/blog/topics/threat-intelligence/untangling-iran-apt42-operations

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Babel Street provides unmatched, analysis-ready data regardless of language, proactive risk identification, 360-degree insights, high-speed automation, and seamless integration into existing systems. We empower government and commercial organizations to transform high-stakes identity and risk operations into a strategic advantage.

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