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Pro-Ukrainian Hackers Target Russian Defense Contractors – Reuters

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Revan Pratama / unsplash

Several Russian defense contractors specializing in air defense, advanced electronics and other weaponry have been targeted by a pro-Ukrainian cyberespionage group using AI-generated documents as decoys, Reuters reported Friday.

The attacks discovered by U.S.-based cybersecurity company Intezer were likely conducted by a group known as Paper Werewolf or GOFFEE, senior security researcher Nicole Fishbein told Reuters.

The group, active since 2022, focuses almost exclusively on Russian targets and is considered pro-Ukrainian within cybersecurity circles.

In one instance, the group used a document purporting to be a concert invitation for senior military officers that was apparently generated by artificial intelligence.

Another document sent under the guise of Russia's Industry and Trade Ministry requested justification of prices according to state pricing regulations.

Paper Werewolf's use of AI-generated documents shows how “accessible AI tools can be repurposed for malicious goals” as well as how “emerging technologies can lower the barrier for sophisticated attacks and why misuse, not the technology itself, remains the core problem,” Fishbein said.

Russian cyber policy researcher Oleg Shakirov told Reuters that the choice of targets highlights the attackers’ interest in Russia’s defense industry.

Access to internal data from major defense contractors could reveal information on “everything from scopes to air defense systems, but also into defense supply chains and R&D processes,” he said.

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