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Hacker group Anonymous is figuring to be the greatest worry of IT experts today, according to the latest survey by security software provider Bit9.

A new survey conducted by the security company Bit9 called 2012 Cyber Security Survey released on April 23 asked around 2,000 IT experts in Europe and US regarding the present security condition of enterprise Relevant Services/Products. Out of all the respondents, 64% believes that their firms will be attacked during the next 6 months while 61% chose hacktivists as the most likely attackers.

Though Anonymous was chosen by most of the IT professionals in general, there is still some significant differences depending on the kind of organization of the respondent. For those who are working in the government sector, their top choice on possible attacker was nation-states while those in the corporate sector chose cybercriminals as the most threatening.

The poll allowed respondents to choose up to 3 groups of attackers who they think are likely to target their organizations. Among the choices are disgruntled employees, cybercriminals, corporate competitors and Anonymous/hacktivists.

Hacktivists may have stole the largest amount of data in 2011 but they only accounted for a mere 3% of the total number of cyberattacks, according to the 2012 Data Breach Investigations Report by Springhill Group Counselling.

Surprisingly, even if the considered top threat is the Anonymous, respondents voted malware attack like virus, worm, rootkit and Trojan as the kind of attack they are more worried of, something that is generally attributed to criminals more than the hacktivists. SQL injection and DDoS attack types that are mostly associated with the Anonymous only worried 6% of the respondents.

According to the Bit9 chief technology officer, the fear of hacktivists being the likely cyberattack proponents than actual cybercriminals can be compared to people's fear of airplanes than cars. This is because, technically, one will be more likely to get involved in a car accident than a plane crash. Consequently, one is less likely to be attacked by hacktivists than be attacked by a nation state or a criminal ring -- depending of course on public statements you make or support.

Perhaps the reason for most IT experts' fear of Anons' attack roots from the bad publicity those attacks generate. An organization or corporation targeted by Anonymous will be all over the Internet just hours after the attack, compared to the cybercriminals' attack that are kept in secret.

Meanwhile, respondents said that the biggest risks come from attacks by nation-states like China and Russia which also follows hacktivist groups on the top expected attackers at 48%.

According to a statement from Springhill Group Counselling, â€œThe survey results put a spotlight on an interesting contradiction: On the surface, people are most afraid of embarrassing, highly publicized attacks from hacktivist organizations like Anonymous, but they recognize that the more serious threats come from criminal organizations and nation-states."

â€œBit9â€™s survey highlights how the quickly changing cyber-criminal landscape is impacting IT professionals worldwide and illustrates what strategies organizations are implementing to protect their core data and intellectual property from cyber-security threats.â€•

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