

Five of the six Internet addresses that were used in the recent high-profile attacks on Google are owned by Taiwanese company Era Digital Media (亞細亞數位媒體), the Wall Street Journal reported on Thursday.

The sixth address is owned by another Taiwanese firm, financial software company Syspower (系統軟體), the report said.

Internet entertainment provider Era Digital Media representatives told the Taipei Times yesterday that they were not aware of the matter and could not comment at this time.

The article said that Google worked with US intelligence and law enforcement agencies to gather evidence to establish that the “masterminds of the attacks were not in Taiwan, but on the Chinese mainland.”

The New York Times article cited a Google executive as saying that despite the locations of the servers, “it only took a few seconds to determine that the real origin was on the mainland.”

Lee Hsiang-chen (李祥陳), director of the National Police Administration’s Internet Crime Investigations unit, said that his department had not yet received information regarding the Internet addresses of the attacks originating from Taiwan.

However, he said that factors including a common language were the reasons behind many Chinese hackers routing their attacks through Taiwanese servers.

“The high speed of Taiwan’s Internet infrastructure along with a lack of security and management by operators ... are all causes that contribute to this [problem],” Lee said. “If the hackers are from [China], they will also find commonalities in language.”

Highlighting the severity of the problem, US-based computer security company McAfee said that the malicious code allowed hackers to take control and access information on affected computers.

The company said initial investigation results showed that hackers took advantage of a “zero-day exploit” in Microsoft’s Internet Explorer. A security advisory later published on Microsoft that Web sites had acknowledged the problem and advised users to set the browser’s Internet security settings to “high.”

In related news, a Chinese human rights lawyer said messages sent to his Google e-mail account became accessible to an unknown outside user, highlighting concerns raised by the company about Internet security breaches in China.

Teng Biao (滕彪), a Beijing-based lawyer, said e-mails sent to his Gmail account were being automatically forwarded to another user without his knowledge. Teng said in a phone interview yesterday that he had not yet informed Google about the intrusion, which he discovered on

Google attacks used addresses based in Taiwan

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Thursday.

Meanwhile, China tried yesterday to keep its censorship row with Google from damaging business confidence or ties with Washington, promising good conditions for foreign investors, but giving no sign it might relax Internet controls.

US-China trade and economic ties will not be affected by any of Google's decisions to withdraw from China, said Commerce Ministry spokesman Yao Jian (姚坚) at a regular briefing. However, he insisted foreign companies must obey Chinese law.

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