

DDoS attacks against banks raise question: Is this cyberwar?

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It's been a month of crippling denial-of-service attacks on websites operated by US banks and financial services firms. A terrorist organisation called Al-Qassam takes credit online, but now the attacks are being blamed on Iran.

Within the past month, crushing blasts of 65Gbps traffic, mainly from thousands of compromised Web servers, has targeted Bank of America, Wells Fargo, US Bank, JP Morgan Chase, Sun Trust, PNC Financial Services, Regions Financial and Capital One. The attacks have effectively cut bank customers off from online services for extended periods.

An Islamic group called the Izz ad-Din Al-Qassam Cyber Fighters claimed credit for most of the distributed denial-of-service (DoS) attacks that started Sept. 18 with Bank of America. A hacktivist group associating itself with Anonymous claimed responsibility for the DDoS against HSBC that started Oct. 18. Banks have been busy apologizing to customers for service disruptions. PNC Financial Services CEO James Rohr, acknowledging last week on CNBC that the DDoS attacks had "really pummeled us," noted cyberattacks "really disrupt this country."

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