

Planned Parenthood Reports Second Website Hack

Planned Parenthood said electronic traffic to its websites was snarled by computer hackers on Wednesday in the second cyber attack mounted against the healthcare organization this week amid a controversy over alleged sales of aborted fetal tissue.

Websites operated by Planned Parenthood and its political branch, Planned Parenthood Action, were clogged by a wide-scale “distributed denial-of-service,” or DDoS, attack, the organization said.

In such attacks, a web server is deliberately flooded with massive amounts of data to block access from legitimate users.

Service was restored shortly after the attack, but the group opted to keep its websites offline for the remainder of the day “to ensure that we are fully protected,” Dawn Laguens, executive vice president of the Planned Parenthood Federation of America, said in a statement.

Visitors to Planned Parenthood sites, which serve some 200,000 people a day seeking information on reproductive health, birth control, sexually transmitted diseases, parenting, abortion and other topics, were being redirected to its Facebook pages for the time being, Laguens said.

The cyber attack, she said, “only shows how far opponents of safe and legal abortion will go.”

It was the second time in as many days Planned Parenthood’s websites were reported to have been breached by hackers.

The group said on Tuesday it had notified the FBI that “extremists who oppose Planned Parenthood’s mission and services” had launched an attack on its information systems.

The group gave few details of that incident, except to say the privacy and safety of its staff had been threatened. The Daily Dot online newspaper reported that hackers had gained access to Planned Parenthood's website databases and the names and email addresses of its employees.

The Daily Dot reported the hackers, who called themselves "social justice warriors," said they planned to release the organization's internal emails soon.

Planned Parenthood has undergone growing scrutiny in recent weeks over two secretly recorded videos that critics said showed the group was involved in the illegal sale of aborted fetal tissue for medical research.

Planned Parenthood insists it has broken no laws because abortion providers are allowed to charge costs to cover expenses associated with fetal tissue donations. On Wednesday, the group called for a blue-ribbon panel to review policies surrounding fetal tissue research.

Senate Republicans are seeking to cut all federal funding, \$500 million a year, that Planned Parenthood receives and redirect that money to other providers of women's health.

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