# DragonForce cyber criminals escalate UK retail attacks with data theft threats



A covert group of cyber criminals known as DragonForce has claimed responsibility for a series of hacking attacks that have disrupted several prominent British retailers, warning that their actions are merely the beginning. The group, along with possible affiliates such as the teenage hacker collective Scattered Spider, has allegedly targeted major stores including Marks & Spencer, the Co-op, and Harrods, leading to concerns over the theft of millions of customers' personal data.

The Co-op confirmed that hackers accessed its systems, resulting in the theft of sensitive personal information, including customer names and contact details. It is feared that Marks & Spencer may have experienced a similar breach, although the company has refrained from commenting on whether customer data is at risk. Stuart Machin, chief executive of M&S, issued an apology to shoppers for the disruptions caused by the attack, which has reportedly hampered online order processing for several days.

In an interview with Bloomberg, the anonymous creators of DragonForce emphasised their preparedness to release stolen data if ransom demands are not met. They indicated that they typically expect millions of pounds in ransom payments, asserting, "Our job is not to destroy, we just take some money and walk away." Their activities suggest an operational model similar to a criminal cartel, as they also sell hacking software to other criminal entities, including Scattered Spider. Last year alone, DragonForce claimed to have targeted more than 90 victims across various industries.

The Information Commissioner’s Office (ICO) has issued warnings to customers of affected retailers, advising them to employ strong and unique passwords for different platforms. Stephen Bonner, ICO deputy commissioner, reassured the public, stating, “We recognise that seeing cyber attacks in the news can be concerning, especially if you are a customer.” He urged those worried about their personal data to access guidance and support on the ICO’s website.

In light of these incidents, retailers across the UK are on high alert for further attacks. Harrods became the latest high-profile retailer to be targeted this week, while industry experts caution against potential 'copycat' hacks.

Pat McFadden, Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster, is expected to address these ongoing cyber threats at the upcoming CyberUK conference, where he will highlight the necessity for companies to prioritise cybersecurity. He plans to warn attendees that cyber criminals are actively attempting to breach corporate systems "every hour of every day," underscoring the urgent need for effective protective measures.

As the ramifications of these cyber attacks continue to unfold, affected retailers face mounting challenges and potential financial losses, further exemplifying the extensive impact of cybercrime on commercial operations in the UK.

Source: [Noah Wire Services](https://www.noahwire.com)

## Bibliography

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7. <https://www.dailymail.co.uk/news/article-14673621/secretive-gang-hacking-attacks-M-S-Harrods.html?ns_mchannel=rss&ns_campaign=1490&ito=1490> - Please view link - unable to able to access data