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APPEAL LOST
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EGGS ON SHELVES
TOO EARLY
FOR EASTER?
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BUSINESS
TRAINING FOR
THE SPORTS-MAD
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NEWS LOCAL

Manly Daily

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Australia's Community Newspaper of the Year*

Under attack

Russia
Mexico
Honduras
Brazil
Argentina
United Arab Emirates
Thailand
Manly

Peter Bodkin

CYBER criminals manipulating computer networks across the globe are targeting internet businesses — and a Manly trader is warning locals to be wary after his website was temporarily crippled in a high-tech extortion attempt. Sulleman Ravell's financial services business, Wealth Focus, was targeted shortly before Christmas when its online investment arm, fundsfocus.com.au, was suddenly shut down in a deliberate cyber attack.

Mr Ravell said the company lost its email and then its entire online operation was brought down after hijacked networks bombarded the website with millions of hits.

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Sulleman Ravell's Manly business was crippled in an extortion attempt from Russia, using networks from around the world.
Picture: VIRGINIA YOUNG
Artwork: ELENE HATZIDANNOU

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MANLY

Russians in cyber attack

BUSINESS FACES WEB EXTORTION THREAT

From Page 1

A few days later he received a message via the disabled website threatening: "I will stop only after you pay me the money. I advise you to quickly reply to me as the attack is very bad impact (sic) on your business."

Mr Ravell ignored the extortionist and contacted police and he was eventually able to stop the attack by temporarily blocking overseas networks and removing the targeted pages until the barrage subsided.

"If this had happened a week earlier, we would have potentially lost about \$20,000 in business," he said.

The "denial of service" (DoS) attack was traced to Russia after initial traffic from virus-infected networks in Southeast Asia, South America and the Middle East.

Mr Ravell said he would

WHAT TO DO

- Call the CERT Australia hotline on 1300 172 499 in the event of an emergency or visit cert.gov.au.
- Report the incident to local police, who should contact the Fraud and Cybercrime Squad.
- Attempt to log the source of the attack, but do not respond to any requests for money.

advise businesses to choose web hosts that were able to protect from DoS attacks after he was left disappointed in his own provider, one of Australia's largest.

NSW Fraud and Cybercrime Squad commander Detective acting Superintendent John Watson said DoS attacks were uncommon, but anyone targeted in a cyber attack should contact the Computer Emergency Response Team for technical advice.

"They should also report the matter to their local police, especially if it is accompanied by an extortion attempt," he said.

An offshore cyber attack was also responsible for shutting down ANZ bank's online broking service, Etrade, Australia's second-largest, before Christmas.

Australian Federal Police national cyber-crime coordinator Brad Marden said the agency had been liaising with several companies recently targeted in similar attacks.

"No one is immune to attempts to access information contained on their networks and adequate protection should be seen as a cost of doing business in the digital age," he said.

Have you been a victim of cyber crime? Tell us your story online at manlydaily.com.au



Suliman Ravell's web-based business was targeted in a cyber extortion attack.

Picture: VIRGINIA YOUNG

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