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LONDON - A well-organized group of hackers has engaged in an "industrial scale" attack designed to cull commercially and economically valuable data from vital computer networks across Britain the government warned Thursday. In one of its most high-profile warnings about sophisticated electronic attacks the normally secretive National Infrastructure Security Coordination Center said hackers believed to be from Asia have targeted parts of the countrys "critical national infrastructure." The attacks have been going on for several months and have involved the communications energy finance health government and transport sectors the NISCC said. Most of the attacks have been against central government computer systems though companies and individuals are also at risk the agency warned. "We have never seen anything like this in terms of the industrial scale of this series of attacks " NISCC Director Roger Cumming said. "This is not a few hackers sitting in their bedroom trying to steal bank account details from individuals." Determining the origin of the attacks was extremely difficult the NISCC said. The agency said it had traced the attacks back to "the Far East" by analyzing the numeric Internet addresses stamped within e-mails. Those addresses however can sometimes be faked and e-mail sent from elsewhere might have been rerouted through Asian computers. A spokesman for Britains Home Office

which oversees the NISCC said the agency was talking to authorities in a number of countries to investigate further and the government believed it was inappropriate to comment further while that process was continuing. 100Test