

# FRANCE Threat Landscape Report

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France, known for its iconic landmarks like the Eiffel Tower, the elegance of Paris, and its world-renowned croissants, is a nation that blends tradition with modernity. Beyond its cultural and artistic heritage, France plays a significant role in the global digital landscape. As a nation deeply integrated into the world's technological and financial systems, France's advanced infrastructure and strategic importance make it a key target for cyber threats.

As the 2024 Paris Olympic Games approach on July 26, security experts say MSSPs and MSPs should already prepare to help their customers mitigate the risks of destructive and debilitating cyberattacks. Recent data reveals a notable increase in cyber-attacks aimed at French critical infrastructure and essential sectors. These attacks are increasingly sophisticated, as threat actors employ complex tactics, techniques, and procedures (TTPs) to breach defenses and exploit vulnerabilities.

France faces cyber threats from various sources, including organized crime syndicates and state-sponsored entities. The country's prominence in manufacturing, information and telecommunication, and retail trade industries makes it a lucrative target for cyber espionage, financial theft, and disruptive operations.

The dark web significantly contributes to the proliferation of these threats, providing a clandestine marketplace for malicious tools, stolen data, and illicit services. The anonymity and reach of the dark web pose substantial challenges for French cybersecurity professionals striving to anticipate and mitigate these threats.

This report provides a comprehensive analysis of the threat landscape in France, utilizing extensive data from open-source and proprietary intelligence. By continuously monitoring cyber activities and scrutinizing attack patterns, our team delivers an in-depth overview of the threats facing French entities. The insights presented herein are designed to empower stakeholders across both public and private sectors to strengthen their cybersecurity defenses, reduce risks, and enhance France's resilience against future cyber threats.

# Top Takeaways



#### Dark Web Dynamics: A Surge in Threat Actor Activity

In 2023, a diverse group of 309 threat actors actively targeted French enterprises, collectively posting 489 times on the dark web, predominantly trading in database sales, underscoring the criticality of data security measures.



#### Vulnerable Sectors: Targeting Information and Telecommunication

The Information and Telecommunication industry, making up 15.54% of dark web activities, stood out as the primary industry targeted by threat actors worldwide, highlighting its strategic importance and vulnerability to digital threats.



#### **Ransomware Resurgence: A Year of Unprecedented Attacks**

France grappled with 324 unique ransomware incidents throughout the year, with 157 attacks pinpointing the country as the primary target, revealing a focused aggression by threat actors.



#### Top Ransomware Threats: LockBit 3.0, ClOp, and Play

Prominent ransomware groups, including LockBit 3.0, ClOp, and Play, specifically targeted France, signifying the high stakes and sophistication of the country's cyber threat landscape.

# **Top Takeaways**



#### Data Breaches on the Rise: The Impact of Stealer Logs

The widespread use of Stealer Logs in 2023 led to significant breaches, compromising critical data for thousands of individuals across France.



#### Phishing in the Digital Economy: Rising Threats in Delivery Services

The year also saw 3,203 phishing attacks, with a marked emphasis on the emerging Delivery Services industry. These attacks spotlighted the growing cyber risks in these innovative financial technologies.



#### **DDoS Deluge: A Record Year of Attacks**

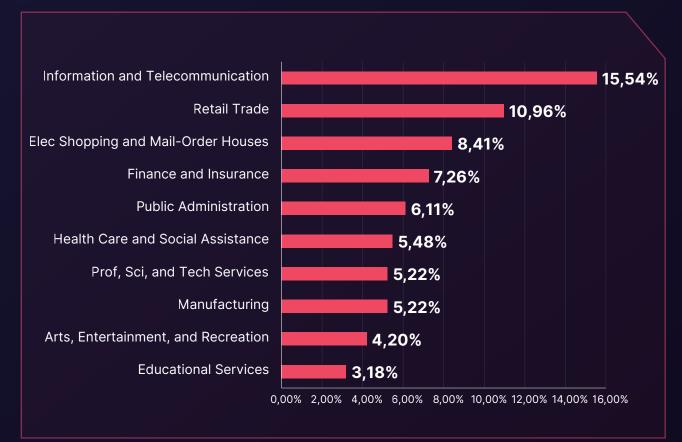
France experienced a landmark DDoS attack involving 25 vectors and achieving a maximum bandwidth of 1,005 Gbps amidst a total of 202,397 DDoS incidents, illustrating the intense and escalating cyber assault landscape.

# **Technical Details**

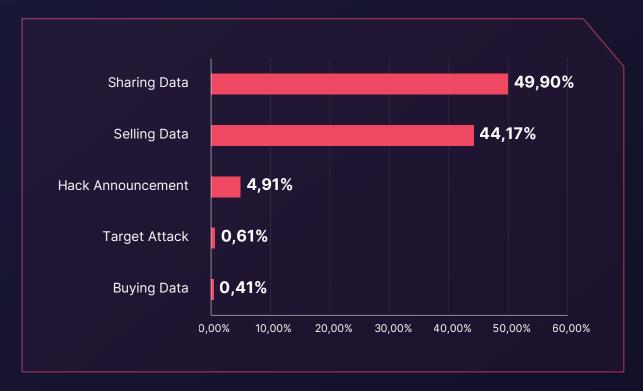
## **Dark Web Threats Targeting France**

Over the past year, SOCRadar's Dark Web Analysts have meticulously monitored dark web activities, uncovering significant trends and establishing connections between French enterprises and covert threat actors. Throughout 2023, French entities faced a relentless wave of cyber threats, with various actors attempting to exploit successful intrusions by trading or leveraging their gains in dark web forums.

During this period, SOCRadar observed 489 dark web forum posts linked to 309 distinct threat actors. The Information and Telecommunication industry emerged as the most prominently affected sector, representing 15.54% of the identified cyber threats. Following closely, the Retail Trade and Electronic Shopping and Mail-Order Houses industries accounted for 10.96% and 8.41% of the threats, respectively.

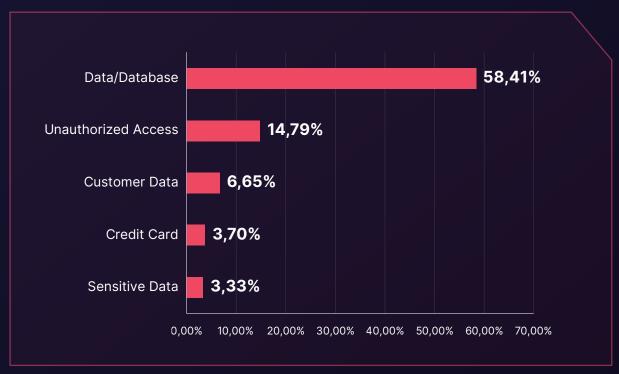


### Industry Distribution of Dark Web Threats



#### Distribution of Dark Web Threats by Post Type

#### Distribution of Dark Web Threats by Threat Type



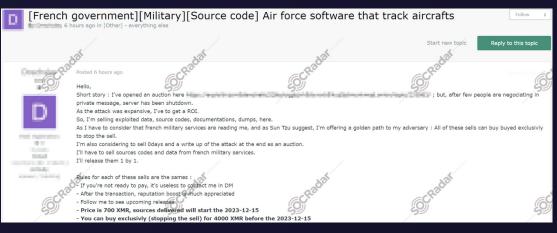
Protect your business from the dangers lurking in the hidden corners of the internet.

**Book your demo** 

# Recent Dark Web Activities Targeting France

### Source Code of French Military is on Sale





Screenshot of the forum post - French Military Source Code Sale

In a hacker forum monitored by SOCRadar, a new alleged source code sale is detected for French Military. The seller claims to have obtained the code through an exploit and is offering it for sale, along with other sensitive data and documentation.

#### Data of a French Call Center are on Sale



A new alleged data sale involving a French call center has been detected in a hacker forum monitored by SOCRadar. The data, containing the personal information of over 10.3 million individuals, includes names, email addresses, phone numbers, dates of birth, addresses, and other sensitive details.

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Screenshot of the forum post -French Call Center Database Sale

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Screenshot of the forum post - French Call Center Database Sale

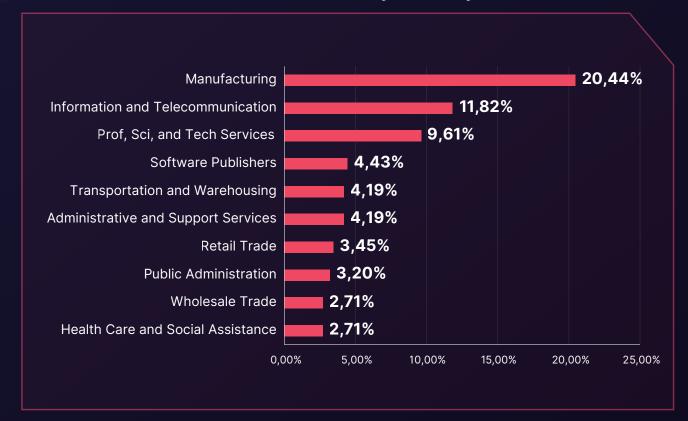
In a hacker forum monitored by SOCRadar, a new alleged database leak is detected for French Ministry of Justice. The leaked database likely contains sensitive personal and legal information, posing a significant risk to individuals and the French government.

# Ransomware Attacks Targeting France

Ransomware attacks represent significant threats to organizations, often resulting in dire consequences such as extensive data loss and the exposure of sensitive information. SOCRadar's surveillance has identified 324 instances of ransomware victim notifications attributable to various ransomware threat actors and/or groups.

Of the 324 ransomware attacks referenced, France emerged as the primary target in 157 cases. The nation also featured among the most affected countries in the remaining 167 global incidents.

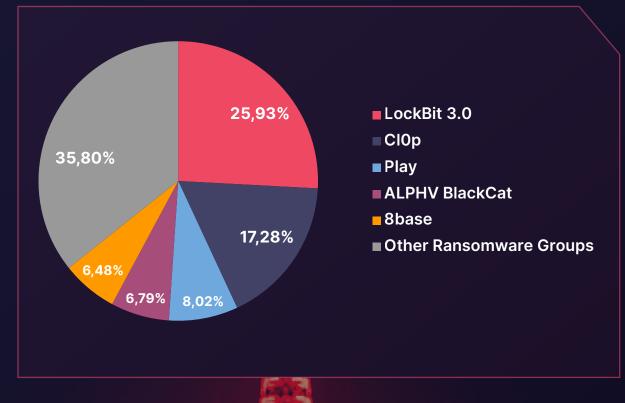
Manufacturing emerges as the most prominently affected sector among the targeted industries, representing 20.44% of the identified ransomware attacks during this period. Following this, the Information and Telecommunication industry accounted for 11.82% of the attacks, while the Professional, Scientific, and Technical Services industry experienced 9.61% of the ransomware incidents.



#### Distribution of Ransomware Attacks by Industry

# **Top Ransomware Groups Targeting France**

When examining the top ransomware groups targeting France, **LockBit 3.0** emerges as the most prolific threat, accounting for 25.93% of the attacks. Following closely, **ClOp** represents 17.28% of the ransomware incidents, while **Play** and **ALPHV BlackCat** contribute 8.02% and 6.79% respectively. Additionally, **8base** accounted for 6.48% of the ransomware attacks. The remaining 35.80% is attributed to various other ransomware groups.



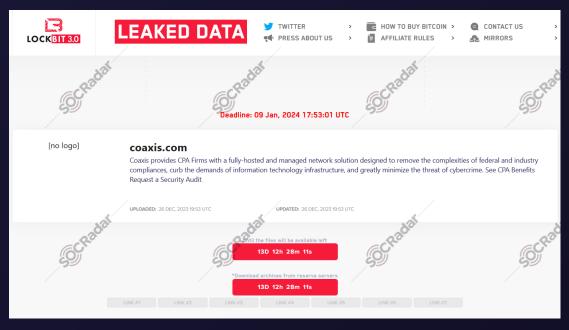
#### Top Ransomware Groups Targeting Targeting France



# Recent Ransomware Attacks Targeting French Entities

#### The New Ransomware Victim of Lockbit 3.0: Coaxis





Screenshot from Lockbit 3.0 ransomware group's website

In the Lockbit 3.0 ransomware group website monitored by SOCRadar, a new ransomware victim was allegedly announced as Coaxis, a provider of network solutions for CPA firms. The ransomware group has set a deadline of January 9, 2024, for Coaxis to pay the ransom, indicating the urgency of the situation.

#### The New Ransomware Victim of CIOp: Cegedim



In the ClOp ransomware group website monitored by SOCRadar, a new ransomware victim allegedly announced as Cegedim, a healthcare software company. The ransomware group has published a ransom demand and threatens to release stolen data if the ransom is not paid.

Headquarters:
137 Rue D'aguesseau, Boulogne-Billancourt, Ile-de-France, 92100, France
Phone:
CR'O CRO
Website
www.cegedim.com
Revenue:
\$553.5M
Industry:
Healthcare Software, Software Development & Design, Software
Warning: addat
CORE
The company doesn't care about its customers, it ignored their security!!!

Screenshot from CIOp ransomware group's website



#### The New Ransomware Victim of Play: Pacte Novation



Screenshot from Play ransomware group's website

In the Play ransomware group website monitored by SOCRadar, a new ransomware victim was allegedly announced as Pacte Novation, a software engineering company in France. The attackers claim to have stolen sensitive data, including personal information, client documents, and financial records.

# **Top Threat Actors Targeting France**

## Lockbit 3.0 Ransomware Group



LockBit 3.0, a successor to LockBit and LockBit 2.0, operates as a Ransomware-as-a-Service (RaaS) group. Since January 2020, LockBit has shifted to an affiliate-based model, employing various tactics to target businesses and critical infrastructure organizations. They are known for employing strategies like double extortion and initial access broker affiliates, as well as recruiting insiders and hosting hacker recruitment contests. With over 1,500 victim announcements on the SOCRadar platform, LockBit emerged as the most active ransomware group in 2022 following Conti's shutdown. As of the first quarter of 2023, they remain the most prolific group, boasting over 300 announced victims.

For more detailed information about the Lockbit 3.0 Ransomware Group, you can visit our <u>blog post</u>.

## **CIOp Ransomware Group**



ClOp is a cybercriminal entity recognized for its sophisticated extortion tactics and widespread dissemination of malware across the globe. The word "clop" comes from the Russian word "klop," which means "bed bug," a Cimex-like insect that feeds on human blood at night (mosquito). A distinguishing feature of ClOp is the string "Don't Worry C|OP" found in the ransom notes.

With a track record of extorting over \$500 million in ransom payments, the group focuses on major organizations on a global scale. Gaining infamy in 2019, Cl0p ransomware group has executed notable attacks, employing extensive phishing initiatives and advanced malware to breach networks and coerce ransom payments, leveraging the threat of data exposure if demands remain unmet.

For more detailed information about the ClOp Ransomware Group, you can visit our <u>blog post</u>.

# **Play Ransomware Group**

	-Ransomware Group-	
Play Ransomware	Motivation:	Financial Gain
	Target Countries:	Latin America, India, Hungary, Spain, Netherlands, United States
	Target Sectors:	Manufacturing, Education, Real Estate, Technology, Transportation, Healthcare
Country of Origin: Unknown		: Compromised Valid Accounts, LOLBins, Ransomware, Data Exfiltration
Play Ransomware (PlayCrypt) is a ransomware group first	-TTPs- Process Injec	ction:T1055
observed in June 2022. The group commonly targets organizations based in Latin	Input Captur	re:T1068
America but mainly focuses on Brazil.	Proxy:	T1090

Play Ransomware is a ransomware group notorious for their advanced tactics and the use of intermittent encryption, a method that allows them to partially encrypt files and evade detection. Initially observed in 2022, they target exposed RDP servers and exploit vulnerabilities in FortiOS to gain network access. Their operations include double extortion, where they threaten to leak stolen data if ransoms are not paid. The group has targeted various sectors, including IT companies, banks, and governmental organizations.

For more detailed information about the Play Ransomware Group, you can visit our <u>blog post</u>.

## **ALPHV Blackcat Ransomware Group**

	-Ransomware Group-		
BlackCat Ransomware	Motivation:	Financial Gain	
	Target Countries:	United States, United Kingdo Canada, Germany, Australia, France, Italy, Spain	m,
	Target Sectors:	Professional Services, Manufacturing, Healthcare, Finance, Information Technology	
Country of Origin: Russia	Attack Type: -TTPs-	Spearphishing, Stolen Credentials, RaaS, Ransomwar Triple-Extortion	e,
BlackCat, or ALPHV, is a ransomware group known for bains the migroup to use Butt	User Executio	on: Malicious File:T1204.0	02
being the pioneer to use Rust and the group first announced its RaaS affiliate program in	Defacement:	T1491	
a dark web forum in December 2021.	Data Encrypt	ed for Impact:T1486	

BlackCat, or ALPHV, is a ransomware group known for being the first to use Rust -a cross-platform language programming language that allows for easy malware customization for different operating systems, such as Windows and Linux- successfully. The group has been able to evade detection and successfully encrypt their victims' files by using Rust, which allows them to target multiple operating systems and bypass security controls that are not designed to analyze malware written in Rust.

For more detailed information about the ALPHV BlackCat Ransomware Group, you can visit our <u>blog post</u>.

### **8base Ransomware Group**

	-Ransomware Group-	
8Base	Motivation:	Financial Gain
	Target Countries:	United States, Brazil, UK, Australia, Germany, Canada, Spain, Italy, Belgium
	Target Sectors:	Professional Services, Manufacturing, Construction, Finance, Healthcare, Transportation
Country of Origin: Unknown	51	RaaS, Ransomware, Double Extortion
8Base is a ransomware group	-TTPs-	
active since April 2022, targeting small and	Phishing: Spe	earphishing Attachment:T1566.001
medium-sized businesses (SMBs) across various	OS Credentia	l Dumping:T1003
sectors, including business services, finance, manufacturing, and IT.	Exfiltration	Over C2 Channel:T1041

8base is a ransomware group that has been active since April 2022. Despite its relatively recent emergence, the group has rapidly gained notoriety due to its aggressive tactics and the significant number of victims it has claimed. The group primarily targets small and medium-sized businesses (SMBs) across various sectors, including business services, finance, manufacturing, and information technology.

The group's identity, methods, and motivations largely remain a mystery. However, based on its leak site and public accounts, along with the group's communications, researchers think the group's verbal style is quite similar to that of RansomHouse, a group that typically purchases already compromised data or works with data leak sites to extort victims. This has led to speculation that 8Base may be an offshoot of RansomHouse.

For more detailed information about the 8base Ransomware Group, you can visit our <u>blog post</u>.

# **Stealer Log Statistics Top Domains in France**

Throughout 2023, thousands of users' user IDs/email addresses, passwords, credit card data, password hashes, and victim IP address information were compromised via Stealer Logs from the computers of users with accounts or access to some of the highest traffic domains in France.

The table below lists the domains associated with France with the highest traffic.





The graph below showcases the distribution of the compromised user data obtained through Stealer Logs across the highest-traffic domains associated with France.



#### Stealer Logs - Compromised Data

The data reveals significant dissemination of compromised information, including **63,968** passwords, **63,206** usernames/emails, **11,267** password hashes, **2,289** credit card data entries, and **562** compromised victim IPs, each representing significant instances of compromise.

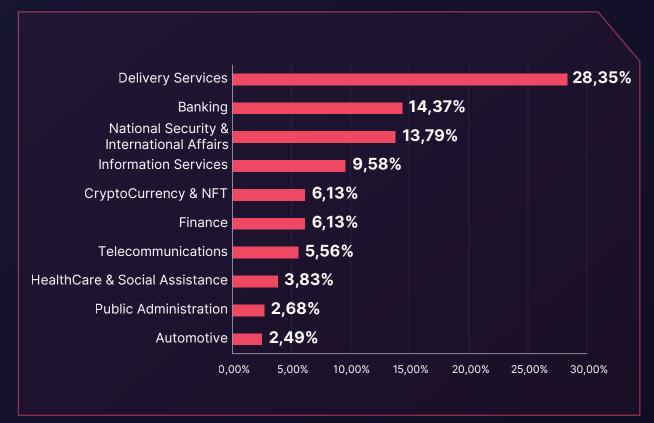
These discoveries emphasize the gravity of data compromises impacting users in France's digital sphere, emphasizing the urgent necessity for robust cybersecurity protocols to alleviate such risks efficiently.

# **Phishing Threats Targeting France**

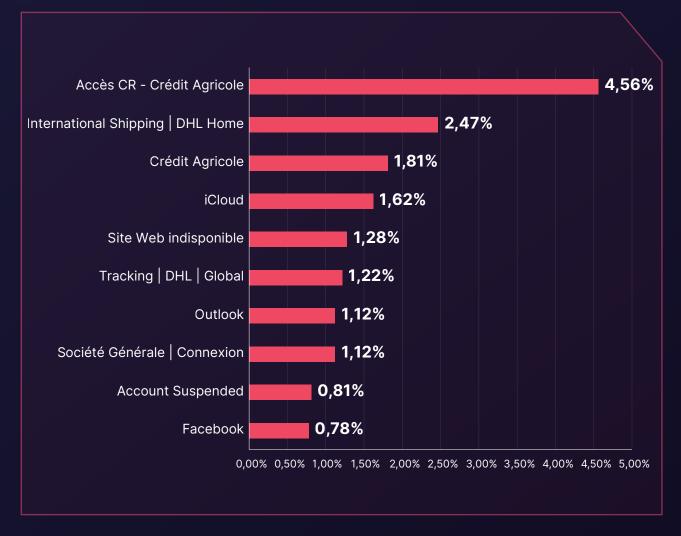
Phishing is an effective method to initially breach an organization's infrastructure by deceiving individuals into divulging sensitive credentials on fraudulent websites.

Typically, phishing attacks are coupled with social engineering tactics to acquire such credentials. Over the past year, French enterprises have encountered **3,203 distinct instances of phishing attacks**, primarily targeting the **Delivery Services** industry.

### Phishing Attacks - Distribution by Industry

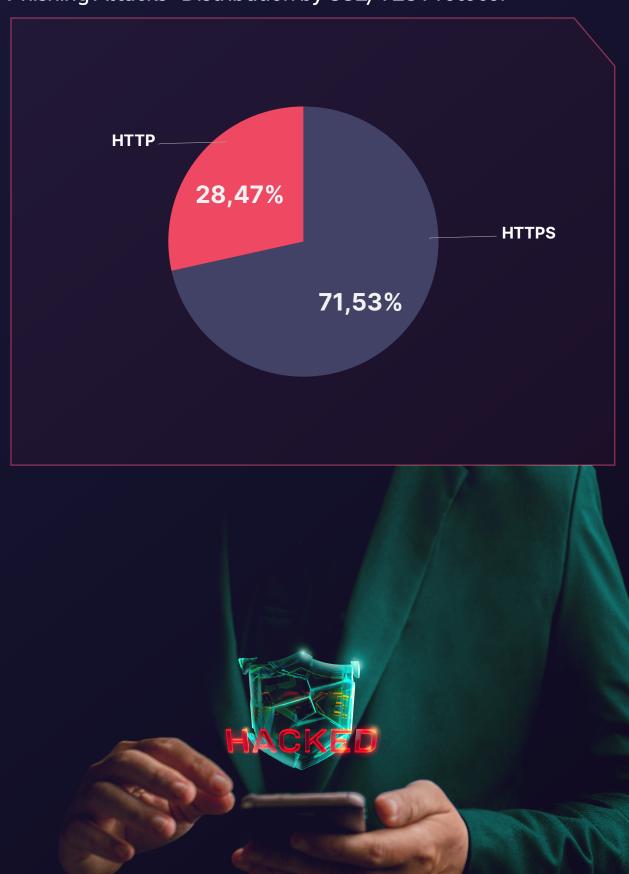


The graph below illustrates the distribution of Page Titles used by threat actors for phishing attacks. Notably, the data reveals a predominant usage of the **Accès CR - Crédit Agricole** page title.



### Phishing Attacks - Distribution by Phishing Page Title

When closely examining the SSL/TLS protocols of domains prepared for phishing attacks by threat actors, we observe an increasing trend in the usage of HTTPS compared to the past.



# Phishing Attacks- Distribution by SSL/TLS Protocol

# **DDoS Attack Statistics**

France experienced a dynamic DDoS threat landscape marked by considerable cyber activity in 2023.

- The most extensive multivector DDoS attack recorded encompassed 25 vectors, featuring prevalent techniques such as TCP ACK and DNS Amplification attacks.
- The maximum bandwidth observed during a DDoS attack reached 1,005
  Gbps (peak aggregate bandwidth in one minute), indicating the severe capacity of these cyber threats.
- The highest recorded throughput during these incidents was **452 Mpps** (peak aggregate throughput in one minute), underscoring the intense rate at which data packets were sent.
- On average, each DDoS attack lasted for **28 minutes**, indicating a strategy focused on short but effective service disruptions.

•	A total of <b>202,397</b> DDoS attacks were recorded throughout the year,
	illustrating a high frequency of cyber-attacks aimed at targets in France.

Number of Attacks in 2023
43,987
42,006
20,957
19,022
18,611

The ongoing evolution of DDoS tactics underscores the importance of implementing stringent monitoring and resilient defense mechanisms to safeguard essential infrastructures and ensure uninterrupted service delivery. Enhance your DDoS defense with SOCRadar's <u>DoS Resilience module</u>, a sophisticated tool designed to assess and fortify your infrastructure's resilience to DoS attacks.

# Lessons Learned: Key Insights and Strategic Recommendations

Upon examining the cybersecurity threats facing organizations in France, several critical lessons and recommendations have emerged. These insights, enhanced by SOCRadar's capabilities, provide a strategic roadmap to bolster cyber resilience and safeguard operational integrity. Here are the key takeaways from our analysis:

#### Vigilance in an Evolving Cyber Threat Landscape

The dynamic nature of the cyber threat landscape, marked by an increase in dark web activities and ransomware incidents related to France, demands constant vigilance. Organizations must keep pace with these changes by adapting their security strategies. By adopting a proactive approach like <u>SOCRadar's Extended Threat Intelligence</u> solution, organizations can gain real-time insights into emerging threats, positioning them to counteract cyber adversaries proactively.

#### Implementation of Multi-layered Security Measures

Given the broad spectrum of industries targeted by cyber threats, it is essential to implement multi-layered security defenses. SOCRadar supports these efforts with its proactive <u>Threat Intelligence</u> and <u>monitoring</u> services, ensuring comprehensive protection.

#### **Consistent Guard Against Ransomware**

The persistent threat posed by ransomware underscores the need for strong defensive and responsive strategies. <u>SOCRadar's Attack Surface Management</u> capabilities are crucial for businesses to identify potential ransomware threats and to formulate effective countermeasures.

#### **Continuous Employee Education and Training**

The ongoing risk of phishing attacks makes continuous education and training for employees imperative. Enhancing their ability to recognize phishing tactics and detection methods is vital. SOCRadar's Digital Risk Protection suite provides comprehensive <u>VIP Protection</u> and <u>Brand Protection</u> services, effectively addressing the challenges posed by identity-based attacks.

#### **Robust Defenses Against Stealer Malware**

With France frequently targeted by Stealer malware, strengthening defenses against this malicious software is crucial. <u>SOCRadar's Identity & Access</u> <u>Intelligence</u> module is vital in detecting and mitigating data breach threats, enhancing an organization's security framework.

#### **Strategies Against DDoS Attacks**

As DDoS attacks become more complex and voluminous, organizations must prioritize the implementation of robust DDoS mitigation strategies. This involves deploying advanced DDoS protection technologies that can absorb high-volume traffic and mitigate multi-vector attack strategies effectively.

Enhance your DDoS defense with <u>SOCRadar's DoS Resilience</u> module, a sophisticated tool designed to assess and fortify your infrastructure's resilience to DoS attacks. Leveraging state-of-the-art Al and cloud technologies, this module provides a crucial layer of protection for global organizations.

#### Conclusion

Adopting a proactive and comprehensive cybersecurity approach is crucial for France's organizations. By partnering with advanced solutions like SOCRadar, they can enhance their defenses and effectively navigate the evolving cyber threat landscape.

Building a culture of risk awareness and implementing proactive mitigation strategies fortifies defenses against dynamic threats. Utilizing Cyber Threat Intelligence empowers teams to respond to immediate threats and confidently prepare for future challenges.

Collaboration among cybersecurity professionals, supported by robust CTI frameworks, is essential for safeguarding digital assets and maintaining organizational resilience against cyber threats.



SOCRadar provides Extended Threat Intelligence (XTI) that combines: "Cyber Threat Intelligence, Brand Protection, External Attack Surface Management, and Dark Web Radar Services." SOCRadar provides the actionable and timely intelligence context you need to manage the risks in the transformation era.

Trusted by 21.000+ companies in 150+ countries

**Dark Web Monitoring:** SOCRadar's fusion of its unique Dark Web recon technology with the human analyst eye further provides in-depth insights into financially-targeted APT groups and the threat landscape.

**Protecting Customers' PII:** Scan millions of data points on the surface, deep and Dark Web to accurately identify the leakage of your customers' Personally Identifiable Information (PII) in compliance with regulations.

**Credit Card Monitoring:** Enhance your fraud detection mechanisms with automation speed by identifying stolen credit card data on popular global black markets, carding forums, social channels, and chatters.

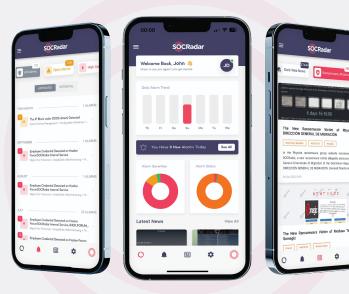
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