Skype: We're Not Hacked

Massive outage caused by problems with software, not with attackers, company says

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Rumors of Skype's hacking are greatly exaggerated, company officials said earlier today.

EBay's popular voice over IP service, which is recovering slowly from a sign-on outage that has locked some users out for more than 24 hours, was initially thought to be a victim of a denial of service attack.

A number of bloggers noted that a Russian hacker had posted a proof of concept exploit earlier in the week on the Security Lab site. The exploit, which describes a method of overloading the Skype site by calling a certain number, was believed to have been used to crash the service.

But in its official blog, Skype moved quickly to deny the reports last night.

"The Skype system has not crashed or been victim of a cyber attack," the blog says. "We love our customers too much to let that happen. This problem occurred because of a deficiency in an algorithm within Skype networking software. This controls the interaction between the user's own Skype client and the rest of the Skype network."

Skype has been the target of attacks in the past. Last October, the service patched a major vulnerability in its MacOS edition. (See Skype Patches VOIP Vulnerability.) And in March, the service fell victim to the Stration/Warezov worm.

Many Skype users still are unable to access the service. In an update issued earlier today, however, the company continued to assert that it is not under attack.

"Neither Wednesday's planned maintenance of our web-based payment services nor any form of attack was related to the current sign-on issues in any way," the company said.

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