

Target: Data stolen from up to 70 million customers



As computer experts peel back the layers of Target's massive data breach, federal and state law enforcement agencies are running parallel investigations to find the cyber criminals who infiltrated the retailer's computers.

Target reported Friday that the cyber thieves compromised the credit card data and personal information of as many as 110 million customers. That data includes phone numbers, email and home addresses, credit and debit card numbers, PINs, expiration dates and magnetic strip information.

"The Secret Service will confirm that it is investigating this incident," spokesman Brian Leary said. "It is an ongoing investigation and we can provide no further comment."

The U.S. Secret Service leads an Electronic Crimes Task Force that brings together federal, state and local law enforcement, prosecutors, computer experts and academics to detect and trace attacks on the nation's financial and computer networks, including identity theft, credit card fraud and bank fraud.

While police hunt for the cyber criminals, attorneys general nationwide say they will look more closely at whether Target provided enough protection for its customers.

"Consumers in New York and around the country expect and deserve companies that protect their personal information when they shop on their websites and in their stores," New York Attorney General Eric Schneiderman said in a statement.

North Carolina Attorney General Roy Cooper said his state would also join the investigation and is seeking information from Target about how many North Carolina consumers may be exposed. Criminals with contact information can target consumers with telemarketing scams, identity theft and phishing, Cooper said.

"Putting millions of people's personal information at risk is unacceptable," Cooper said. "Companies must do a better job of protecting their customers if they want to earn their business and their trust."

Hadley Malcolm, USA TODAY January 10, 2014