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Hackers charged, but we're no safer

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The U.S. Justice Department yesterday may have [charged 11 people](#) in the cyberheist of millions of credit card and debit card numbers from major U.S. retailers like TJX and Barnes & Noble, but the public shouldn't rest easy.

Security experts at [Black Hat](#) warn the charges will probably have minimal impact on the flourishing market for cybercrime, pegged at \$100 billion a year. "So what?" says Nicholas Stamos, president of security vendor [Verdasys](#). "Someone could be developing a warehouse of stolen personal data."

Because most of the data had been floating on the Internet for months -- maybe years -- enterprising hackers and criminal groups are coming up with new ways to further bleed the credit-card accounts of consumers. One trick is to view the history of a consumer's credit card purchases, and mimick their behavior to avoid suspicion.

What also worries experts like Stamos is a surge in attempts to compromise the computer networks of TJX and others, whom its customers trust. "Before it was the banks," he says. "Now it's our most trusted brand names."

By *Jon Swartz*
Photo: *David McNew, Getty Images*