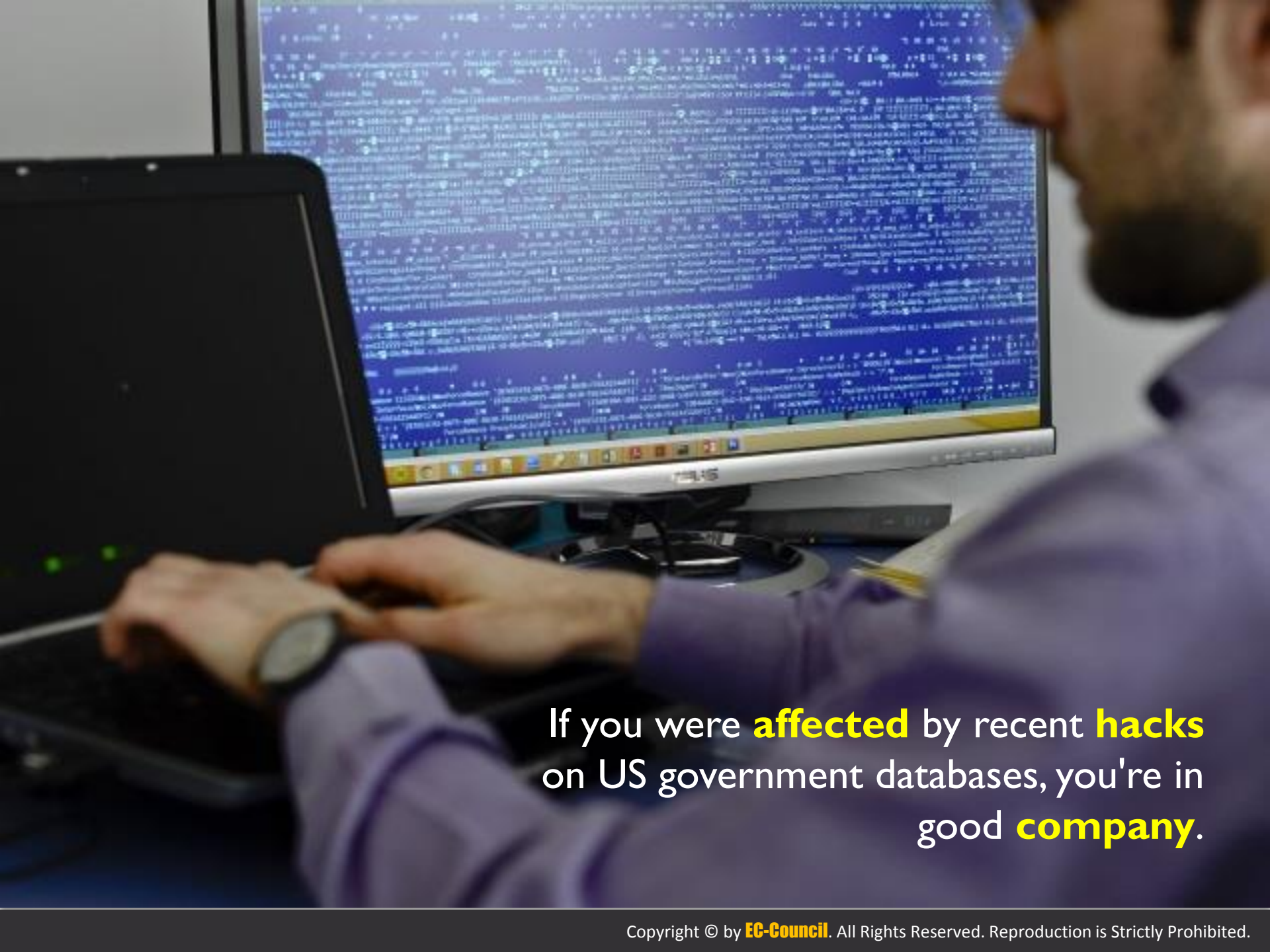


Over 22M Social Security Numbers Stolen in OPM Hacks

- A Case Study

<https://www.opm.gov/news/releases/2015/07/opm-announces-steps-to-protect-federal-workers-and-others-from-cyber-threats>





If you were **affected** by recent **hacks** on US government databases, you're in good **company**.

Announcement by Federal Government on Thursday

The **total** number of people affected by **cyberattacks** on the US government's personnel office was more than **22** million.



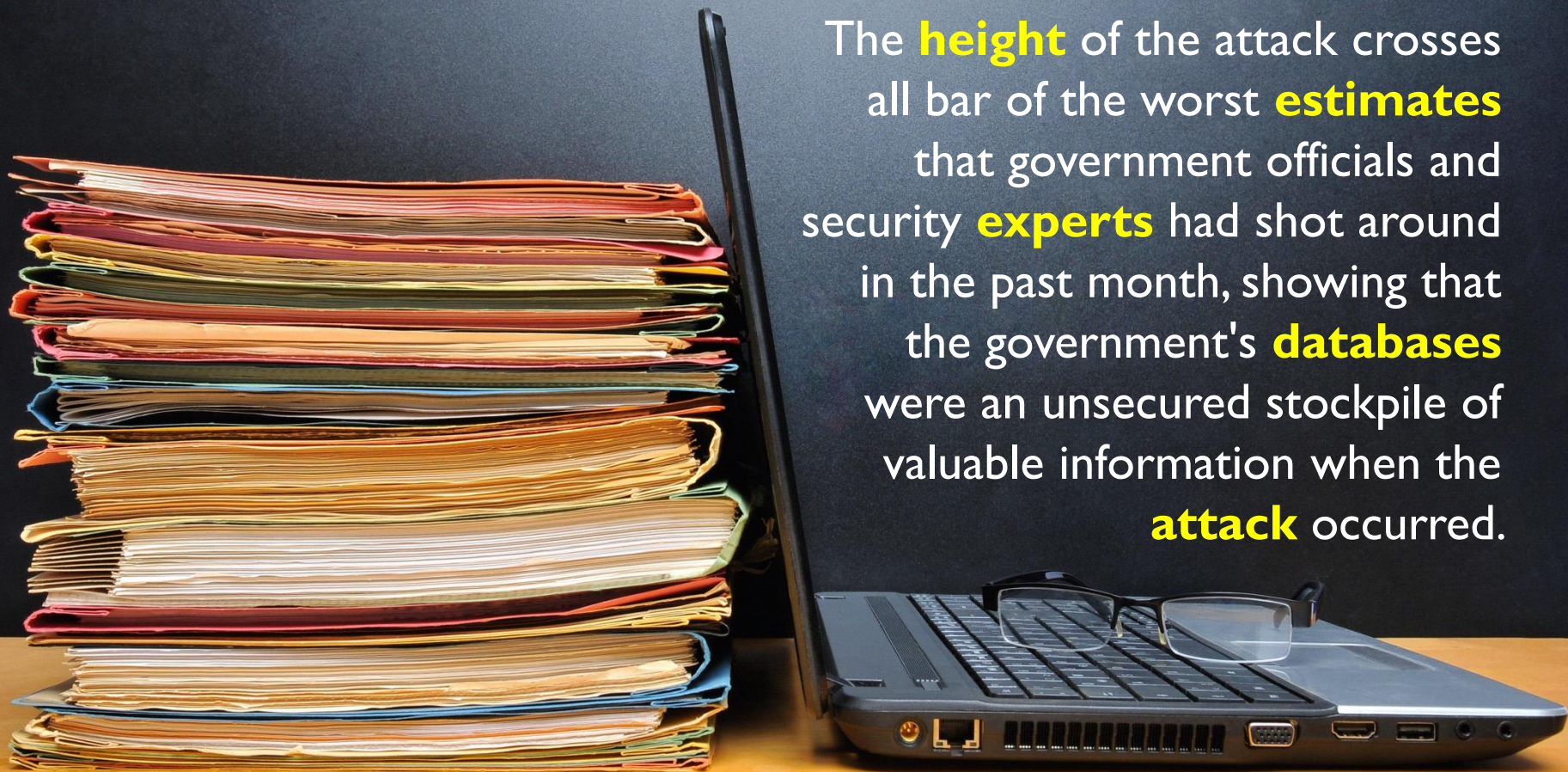
21.5 million Social **Security** numbers were stolen from one source and **4.2** million from another. Both attacks were announced in **June**.

Loss in this **Attack**



Some people were hit with a double **whammy**, having their information compromised in both breaches, **leading** to the government's total figure of **22.1** million stolen Social **Security** numbers.

Estimated Loss by Government Experts



The **height** of the attack crosses all bar of the worst **estimates** that government officials and security **experts** had shot around in the past month, showing that the government's **databases** were an unsecured stockpile of valuable information when the **attack** occurred.

It's the **largest** blemish on the **government's** record of controlling its **systems**, and follows a string of attacks that includes the **hacking** of the **CIA's** public website, the interception of **White House** emails and the breach of a **military** Twitter account.




The background of the slide features a complex, abstract pattern of glowing blue lines and light trails. These lines form a grid-like structure that curves and flows across the frame, creating a sense of motion and depth. The overall aesthetic is futuristic and technological, with a color palette dominated by various shades of blue against a dark background.

According to The **New York Times**

A previous **attack** blamed on
China **attempted** to intercept
information on **federal** employees
with top secret **security** clearance
in **March** 2014.




According to **CNN**



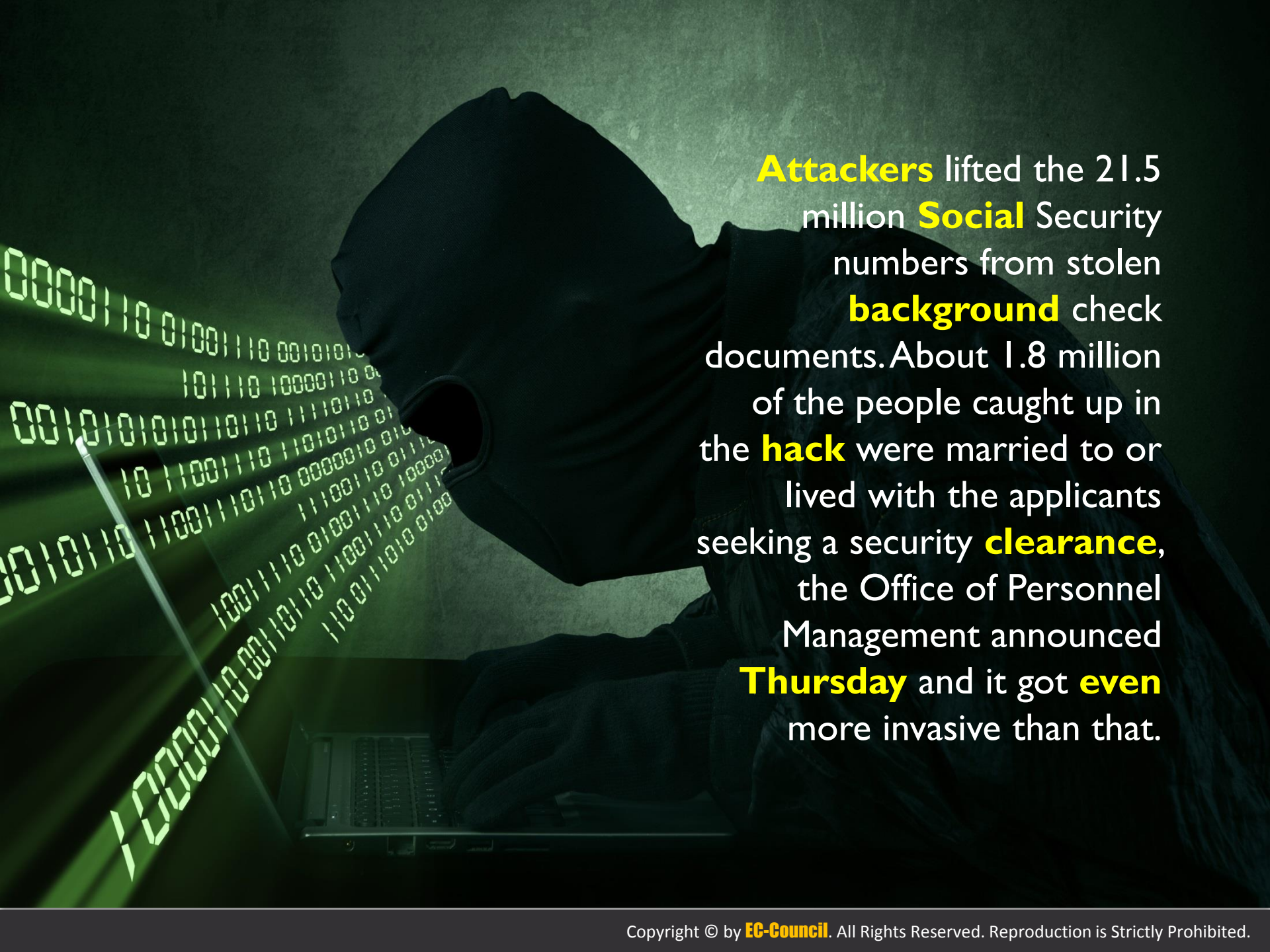
FBI Director James Comey purportedly **estimated** that 18 million people were affected by the attacks on OPM databases.



Which prompted **US** Congressman Jason Chaffetz (R-Utah) to grill Office of **Personnel** Management Director Katherine Archuleta on the total number at a **congressional** hearing in late June.



Archuleta declined to give a number at the time, saying the agency was still **sorting** out how many people's Social Security **numbers** were in the **forms**.



Attackers lifted the 21.5 million **Social** Security numbers from stolen **background** check documents. About 1.8 million of the people caught up in the **hack** were married to or lived with the applicants seeking a security **clearance**, the Office of Personnel Management announced **Thursday** and it got **even** more invasive than that.



"As noted above, some **records** also include findings from interviews conducted by background **investigators** and approximately 1.1 million include **fingerprints**," the agency said in its **press** release.

According to an **OPM** spokesman

The two **database** breaches were "related and added that the **FBI** is still determining who was responsible for hacking the **background-check** documents.

He first hack has been tied by some in the **federal** government to Chinese hackers, but few further details have **emerged**.



DATA BREACH

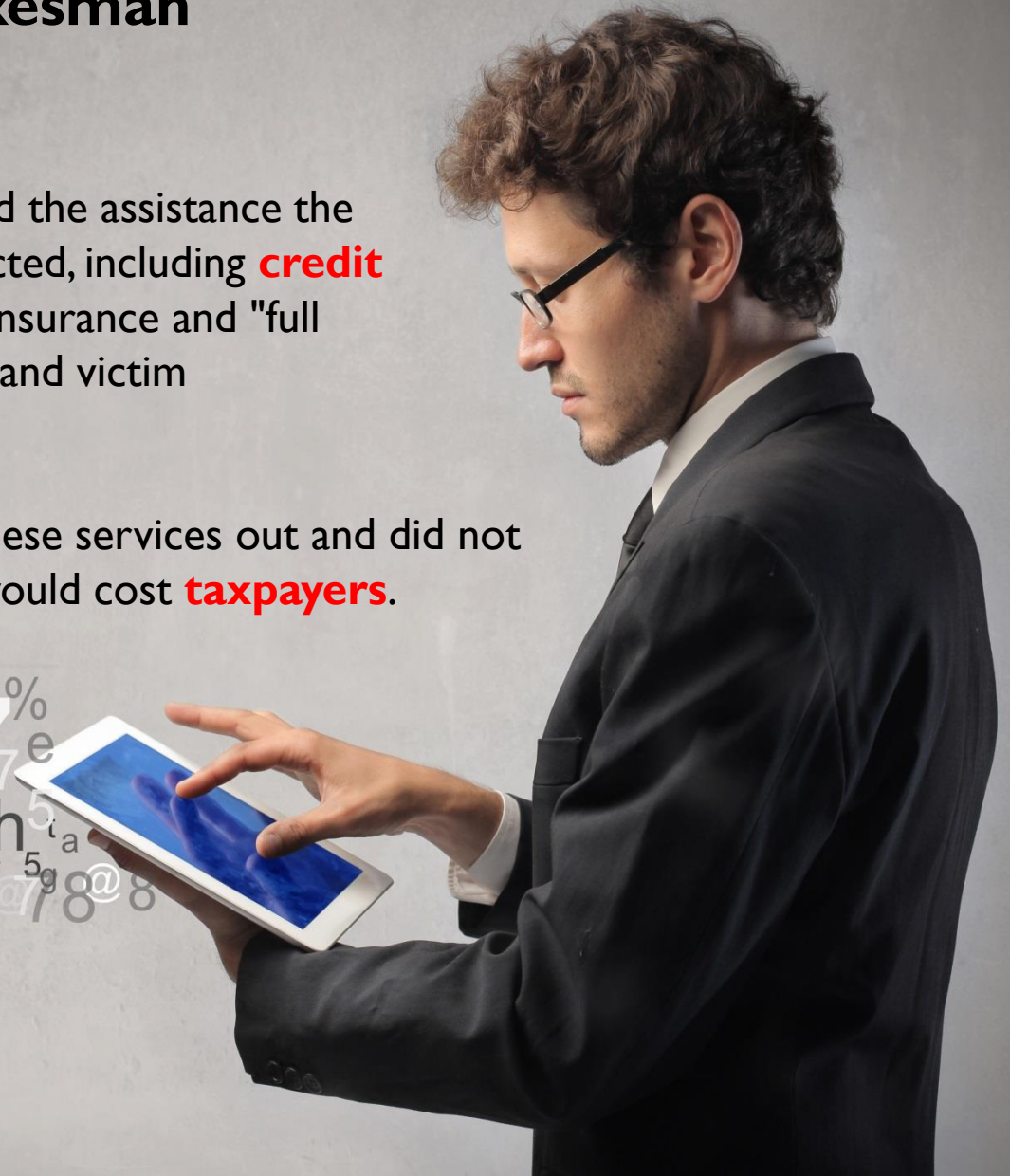


The two database **breaches** were "related," an OPM spokesman said, and added that the **FBI** is still determining who was **responsible** for hacking the background-check documents. The first hack has been tied by some in the **federal** government to **Chinese** hackers, but few further details have **emerged**.

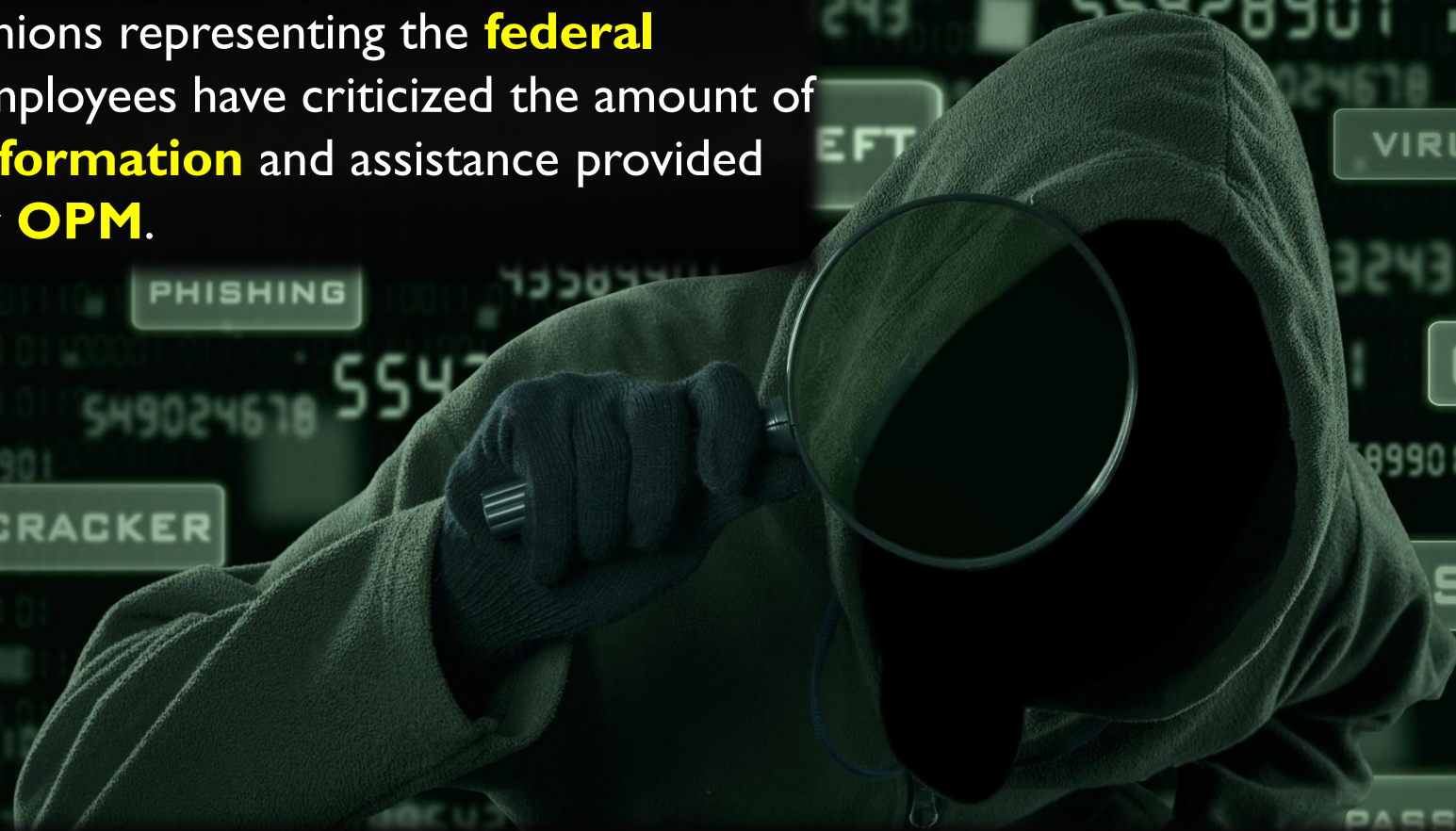
According to **OPM** spokesman

The **OPM** press release also detailed the assistance the government will **provide** those affected, including **credit** and fraud monitoring, identity theft insurance and "full service identity restoration support and victim **recovery** assistance."

The agency was still **contracting** these services out and did not have an **estimate** of how much it would cost **taxpayers**.



Unions representing the **federal** employees have criticized the amount of **information** and assistance provided by **OPM**.



Two **unions** have sued the federal government on behalf of their members, and before the agency **announced** the second, larger hack, the American **Federation** of Government Employees accused the government of downplaying the number of people **affected** and the extent of the compromised **records**.

According to **Security Experts**



"There is no **information** at this time to suggest any misuse or further **dissemination** of the information that was Stolen from **OPM's** systems," the **agency's** release said. But the **impact** of the lost information will be **impossible** to guess.

According to **Chris Wysopal**, a security expert at **Veracode**

"While we haven't seen the **personal** information being used yet, this is to be **expected**," a company that checks source code used in **90** percent of software applications for known **flaws**.

In fact, that we haven't seen the **hackers** tip their hand and identify themselves by using the data shows their level of sophistication.

"It's rare that **information** that can be used for **blackmail** or as precursor information for **phishing** attacks would be seen being used."





According to **Stephen Coty**, an executive at Alert Logic and security researcher

The **breach** of data on federal agents, including extremely personal background-check interviews, at the **FBI** and beyond gives hackers tools for **blackmail** and espionage

“He was just talking to a **federal** officer last week,” .“He knows his information's in there, and so are all his **colleagues**.” Indeed, Comey -- the **FBI** director -- told National Journal reporters that he knows his information was **compromised** in the hack.

According to **Stephen Coty**



"It really puts them in **harms** way more than ever before," he said
"It's already been **tough** to be in federal law **enforcement**."

**To know more about these
attacks and how to secure your Information
Systems become a **Certified Ethical Hacker****