

The ransomware attack on Westpole is disrupting digital services for Italian public administration

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An alleged Lockbit 3.0 ransomware attack on the Italian cloud service provider Westpole disrupted multiple services of local and government organizations and municipalities.

A [cyber attack hit on December 8, 2023](#) the Italian cloud service provider Westpole, which is specialized in digital services for public administration. The incident impacted a Westpole's customer company named PA Digitale which offers its services to various local and government organizations that rely on its platform Urbi. PA Digitale provides its service to 1300 public administrations, including 540 municipalities.

The company notified the privacy regulator Garante della Privacy and the Italian police, which are investigating the cyber attack,

According to people with knowledge on the matter, Westpole was the victim of a ransomware attack. Threat actors employed the [Lockbit 3.0](#) variant, however, at the time of this writing the company is not listed on the Tor leak site of the Lockbit gang.

The attackers employed Lockbit ransomware to target PA Digitale and the security incident paralyzed the services of the many public administrations and municipalities. Several municipalities were forced to return to manual

operations to provide certain services. The Italian cybersecurity agency “Agenzia per la Cybersicurezza Nazionale (ACN)” is currently working to recover data for the impacted entities.

During the last hours, some of the Italian media reported that the attack could interfere with the payments of December salaries to the employees at some of the impacted government organizations.

The ACN provided the following statement:

“The activity carried out allowed the recovery of the data subject to the attack for more than 700 of the national and local public entities linked to the supply chain of PA Digitale S.p.A”. reported the ACN.

“For the remaining Administrations – there are approximately 1,000 public entities contractually linked to PA Digitale S.p.A. for the provision of management services of various kinds – the need remains to recover data dating back to the 3 days preceding the attack, which occurred on 8 December”.

“It should also be specified, as confirmed by the PA Digitale company itself, that the activity carried out allows us to avoid the feared failure to pay December salaries and the thirteenth salary to the employees of some indirectly affected local administrations”.

The extent of damage resulting from the ransomware attack is difficult to assess. [According to the Italian media outlet La Repubblica](#), Westpole has only managed to restore 50% of its systems. The ACN indicates a slow and challenging recovery process, raising uncertainty about the company’s ability to fully restore the impacted systems. Experts caution that affected public administrations may struggle to fulfill certain services and obligations to their employees.

Immediately following the revelation of the Westpole attack, the cloud service provider asserted that no data was exfiltrated from its systems. However, if the ransomware attack is confirmed, it’s challenging to believe that a sophisticated group like Lockbit 3.0 refrained from exfiltrating any data.

The only certainty at the moment is that the attack on Westpole is the most serious suffered by the Italian public administration to date.

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