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# Security Newsletter

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# Bombshell Report Finds Phone Network Encryption Was Deliberately Weakened



A weakness in the algorithm used to encrypt cellphone data in the 1990s and 2000s allowed hackers to spy on some internet traffic, according to a new research paper.

The paper has sent shockwaves through the encryption community because of what it implies: The researchers believe that the mathematical probability of the weakness being introduced on accident is extremely low. Thus, they speculate that a weakness was intentionally put into the algorithm. After the paper was published, the group that designed the algorithm confirmed this was the case.

A spokesperson for the organization that designed the GEA-1 algorithm, the European Telecommunications Standards Institute (ETSI), admitted that the algorithm contained a weakness, but said it was introduced because the export regulations at the time did not allow for stronger encryption.

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