

Fighting Malicious SEO Campaigns at a National Level – the Case of Brazil

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cert.br nic.br cgi.br



Computer Emergency Response Team Brazil

National CSIRT of Last Resort

Services Provided to the Community

Incident Management

- ▶ Coordination
- ▶ Technical Analysis
- ▶ Mitigation and Recovery Support

Situational Awareness

- ▶ Data Acquisition
 - ▶ Distributed Honeypots
 - ▶ SpamPots
 - ▶ Threat feeds
- ▶ Information Sharing

Knowledge Transfer

- ▶ Awareness
 - ▶ Development of Best Practices
 - ▶ Outreach
- ▶ Training
- ▶ Technical and Policy Advisory

Affiliations and Partnerships:



SEI
Partner
Network



Mission

To increase the level of security and incident handling capacity of the networks connected to the Internet in Brazil.

Constituency

Any network that uses Internet Resources allocated by NIC.br

- IP addresses or ASNs allocated to Brazil
- domains under the ccTLD .br

Governance

Maintained by **NIC.br** – The National Internet Registry (NIR)

- all activities are funded by .br domain registration

NIC.br is the **executive branch of CGI.br** – The Brazilian Internet Steering Committee

- a multistakeholder organization
- with the purpose of coordinating and integrating all Internet service initiatives in Brazil

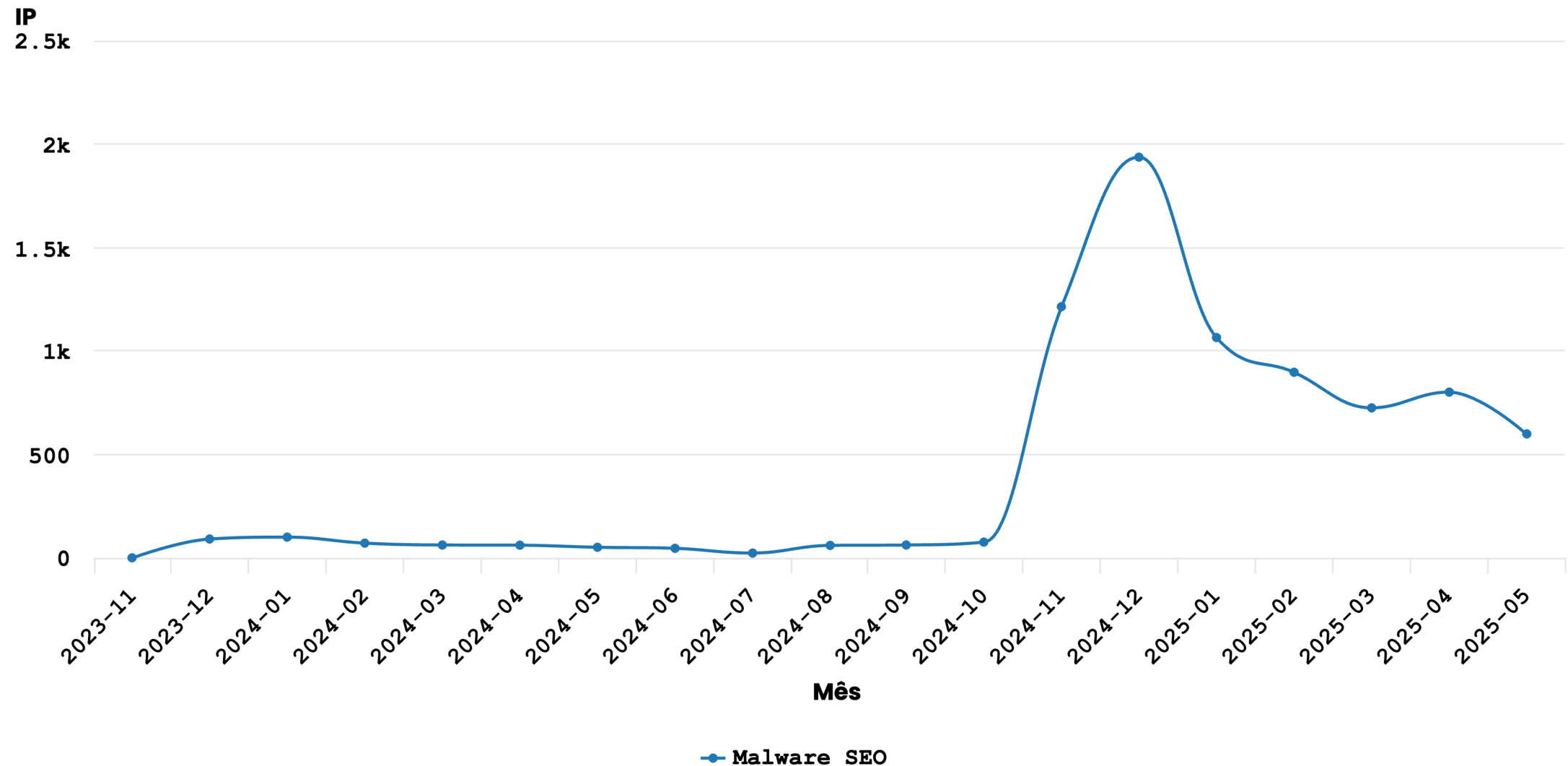
<https://cert.br/about/>
<https://cert.br/sobre/filiacoes/>
<https://cert.br/about/rfc2350/>

Definitions

- Search engine optimization (SEO): the process of improving the quality and quantity of website traffic to a website or a web page from search engines. Techniques are described by Google at:
<https://developers.google.com/search/docs/fundamentals/seo-starter-guide>
- Malicious Search Engine Optimization (SEO) Campaigns
 - compromise legitimate websites
 - include terms related to the content they want to promote
 - include links to other compromised websites, to create cross-reference
 - only serve the “malicious” content to search engine related requests
 - indexing bots
 - users following links from search results

Unique IP Addresses of Compromised Webservers Being Abused in Malicious SEO Campaigns

TLP:CLEAR

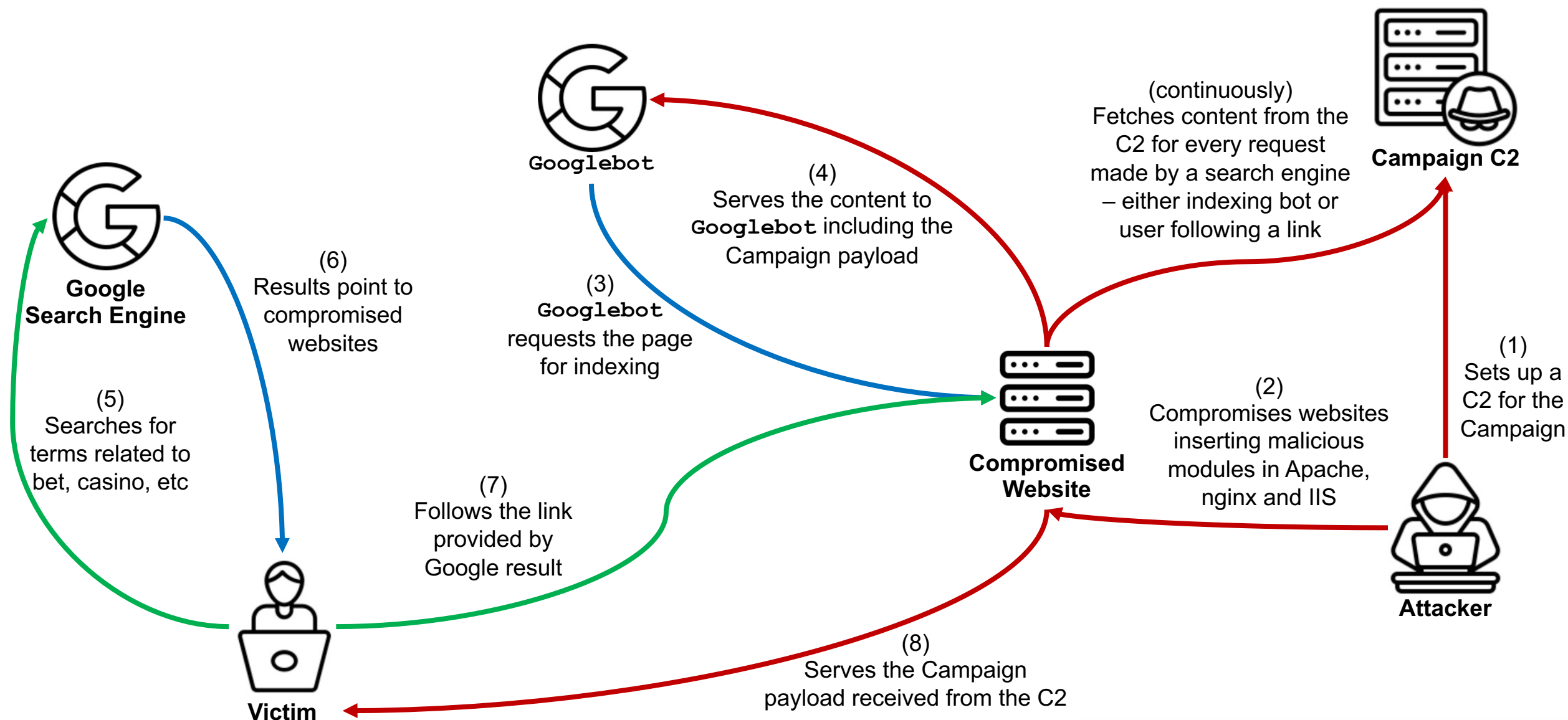


Source: <https://stats.cert.br/ioc/>

Fonte: CERT.br — <https://stats.cert.br/> — by Highcharts.com

Overview of the Attack

TLP:CLEAR



Google Search Example

TLP:CLEAR

Google
bet ypiranga x nautico site:.br

https://...es.gov.br > bet > ypiranga-...
ypiranga x nautico | Aposte já!
ypiranga x nautico **TigerVIP.APP** Ganhe 40R\$ ao se inscrever para jogar Ganesha Gold em nosso cassino online! Por ypiranga x nautico, da Agência Brasília | Edição ...
66.655 respostas · Melhor resposta: ypiranga x nautico **TigerVIP.APP** Ganhe 40R\$ ao s...

https://...edu.br · 31 de mar. de 2025
classificações de náutico x ypiranga futebol clube
... de náutico x ypiranga futebol clube, Cassino online 24 ... **bet** slots online free tips champions league partidas de londrina esporte ...

https://...edu.br > video > nautico x ypiranga p...
nautico x ypiranga palpites
Acumule pontos em apostas esportivas e desbloqueie jogos exclusivos de cassino na nautico x ypiranga palpites!

https://...sp.gov.br > bet > campeonato-italiano
campeonato italiano
... ypiranga x trem YSwin Ganesha Gold ypy **bet** YSwin Jogo YSwin YSwin Fortune ...
nautico yoyo casino no deposit bonus YSwin app YSwin baixar app YSwin ...

http://...am.gov.br > game > nautico x ypiranga palpites
nautico x ypiranga palpites
nautico x ypiranga palpitesDo Brasileiro à Champions League, todas as competições em uma só plataforma. nautico x ypiranga palpites, o paraíso do apostador!

Google
bet ypiranga x nautico site:.br

Todas Notícias Vídeos Imagens Shopping Vídeos curtos Web : Mais Ferramentas

https://...gov.br > game > nautico x ypirang...
nautico x ypiranga palpites
nautico x ypiranga palpites! Mais de 450 jogos de mesa com limites para todos os perfis: de R\$0,50 a R\$1.000.000 por rodada.

https://...edu.br > ios > nautico x ypiranga palpites
nautico x ypiranga palpites|AppStore1.22
nautico x ypiranga palpites,Segurança verificada por auditorias internacionais independentes. Na nautico x ypiranga palpites, transparência é compromisso!

https://...edu.br · 2 de abr. de 2025
nautico x ypiranga palpites_V2.37

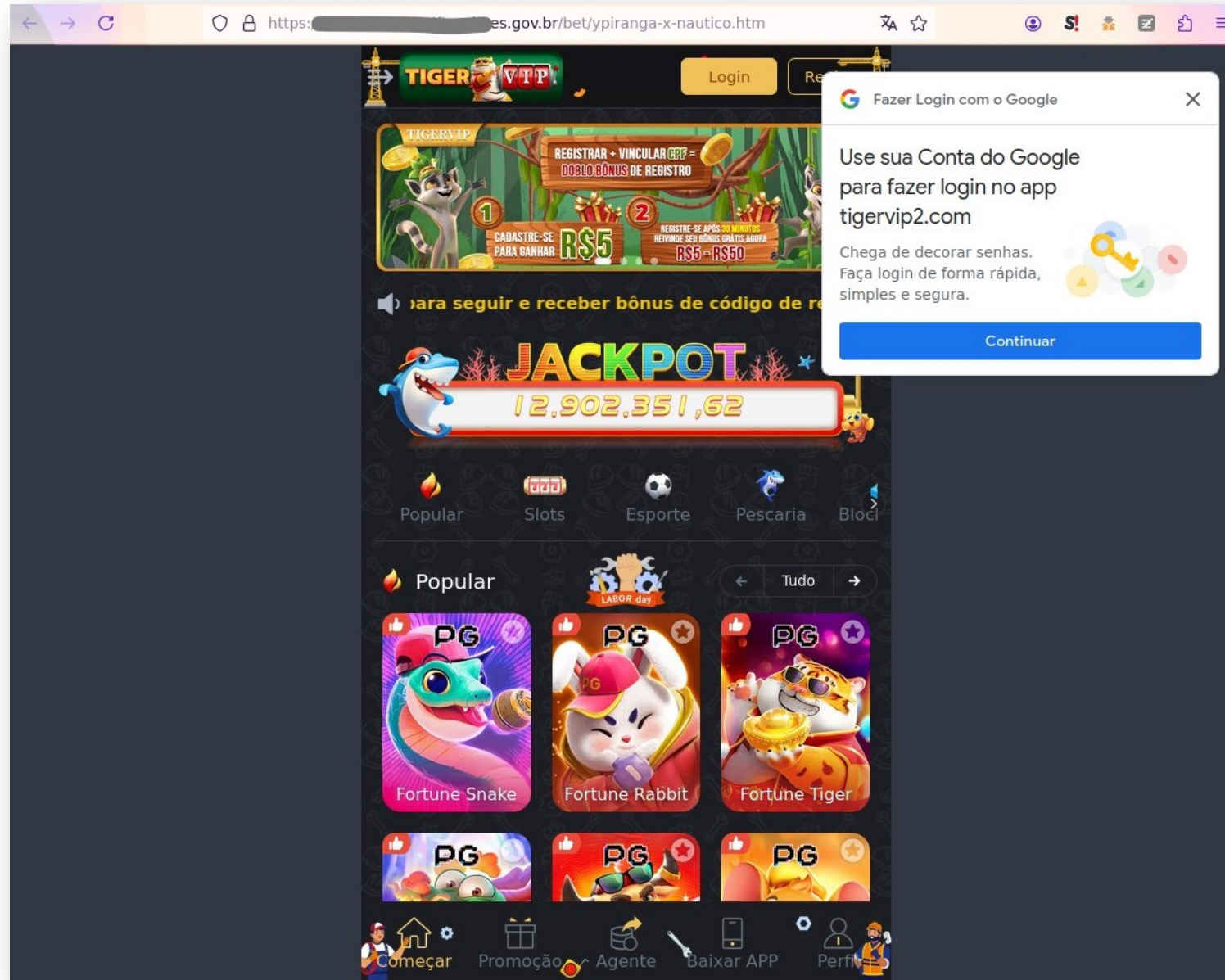
nautico x ypiranga palpites,Plataforma com modo econômico para conexões limitadas ... bochum x cassino rio grande bingo pop **bet** 365 directo jogar jogo da mega com ...

https://...edu.br · 1 de abr. de 2025
náutico x ypiranga palpites- Android App

náutico x ypiranga palpites,Líder na Ásia, agora conquistando o Brasil! Experimente nosso cassino ao vivo com dealers profissionais e HD streaming.

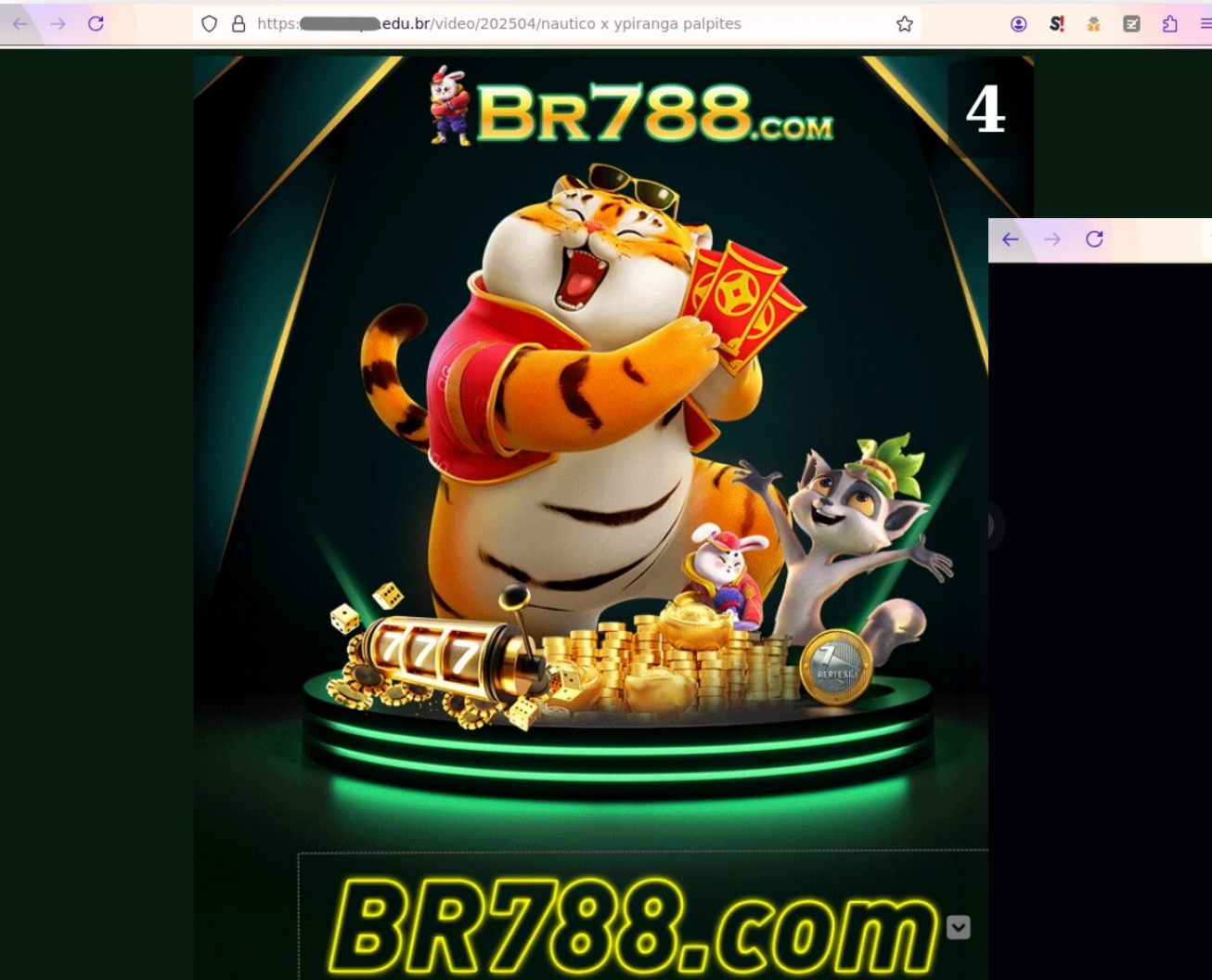
Result following the first highlighted link

TLP:CLEAR

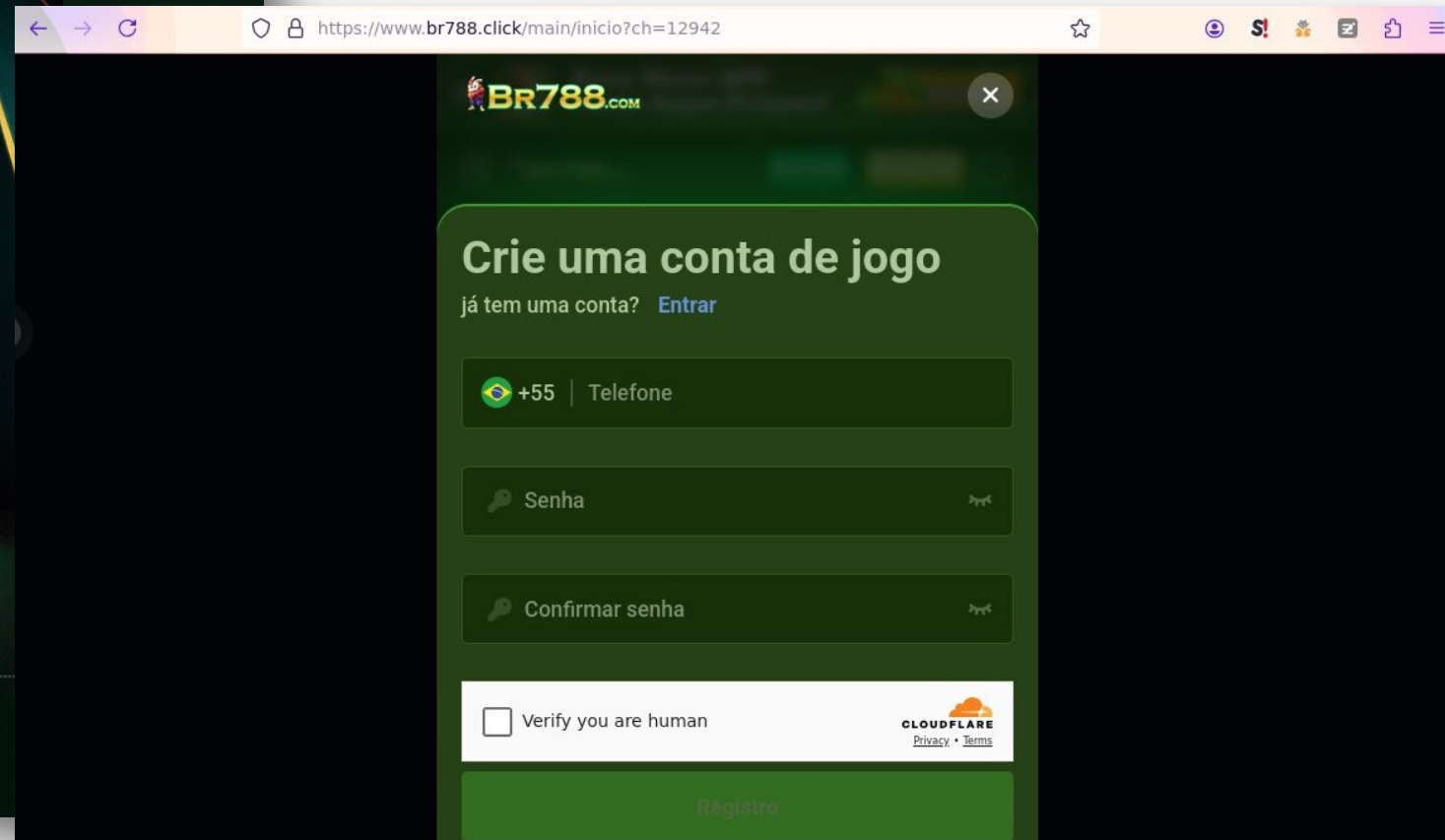


Result following the second highlighted link

– Plays a video for 5 seconds...



– ...then redirects to the website



Compromised site: regular view vs Googlebot view

TLP:CLEAR

```
$ curl -L -s -A Googlebot https://[victim].edu.br/
```

```
$ curl -L -s https://[victim].edu.br/
```

```
<script nonce="Ia9nj1ljawc2En6k70kJwJM6">^M
window.addEventListener('DOMContentLoaded', (event) => {^M
  const loginShowing = document.querySelector('a[href$=
const leftPanel1 = document.querySelector("#recently-updated-
const leftPanel2 = document.querySelector("#recent-ac
const leftPanel3 = document.querySelector("div.activity-list"
const rightPanel = document.querySelector("div.tri-la
  if (loginShowing) {^M
    leftPanel1.style.visibility = 'visible';^M
    leftPanel2.style.visibility = 'visible';^M
    leftPanel3.style.visibility = 'visible';^M
    rightPanel.style.visibility = 'visible';^M
  }^M
});^M
</script>
<!-- End: custom user content -->

<!-- Translations for JS -->
</head>
<body
  class="tri-layout ">

  <a class="px-m py-s skip-to-content-link print-hidden" href="
<div component="notification"
  option:notification:type="success"
  option:notification:auto-hide="true"
```

```
const rightPanel = document.querySelector("div.tri-layout-right");^M
if (loginShowing) {^M
  leftPanel1.style.visibility = 'visible';^M
  leftPanel2.style.visibility = 'visible';^M
  leftPanel3.style.visibility = 'visible';^M
  rightPanel.style.visibility = 'visible';^M
}^M
});^M
</script><div class="sitemap">
  <h1>Sitemaps</h1>
  <div class="urls">
    <a href="/ios/202505/good%20slots">good slots</a>
    <a href="/ios/202505/gold%20casino%20game%20777">gold casino game 777</a>
    <a href="/game/2025-05/estados%20unidos%20basquete%20jogo">estados unidos basquete jogo</a>
    <a href="/app/202505/gazovik%20orenburg%20x%20cska">gazovik orenburg x cska</a>
    <a href="/game/202505/cassino%20em%20cuba">cassino em cuba</a>
    <a href="/video/2025-05/barcelona%20e%20real%20sociedad">barcelona e real sociedad</a>
    <a href="/game/202505/macaca">macaca</a>
    <a href="/android/202505/7.bet%20entrar">7.bet entrar</a>
    <a href="/ios/202505/lol%20dl">lol dl</a>
    <a href="/ios/202505/baixar%20lobo888">baixar lobo888</a>
    <a href="/android/202505/aviator%20horarios">aviator horarios</a>
    <a href="https://[redacted].br/app/2025-05/jogos%20campeonato%20brasileiro">jogos campeonato brasileiro</a>
    <a href="https://[redacted].gov.br/android/202505/numeros%20da%20sorte%20para%20mega%20da%20virada%202023">numeros da
    <a href="http://[redacted].edu.br/video/2025-05/grafico%20lobo888">grafico lobo888</a>
    <a href="http://[redacted].br/video/202505/o&#039;que%20%C3%A9%20saque%20corre">o&#039;que é saque corre</a>
    <a href="https://[redacted].br/static/help.jsp?ios=202505%2Fjogos%20de%20pr%C3%A9-ol%C3%ADmpico">jogos de pré-olimpico</a>
    <a href="https://[redacted].edu.br/ios/202505/grupo%20telegram%20f12%20bet">grupo telegram f12 bet</a>
    <a href="http://[redacted].br/sigaa/public/programa/index.jsp?android=202505%2Funo%20jogo%20online">uno
    <a href="https://[redacted].edu.br/ios/202505/jogo%20rainha%20777">jogo rainha 777</a>
    <a href="http://[redacted].edu.br/game/2025-05/jogos%20de%20pintar">jogos de pintar</a>
    <a href="https://[redacted].com.br/android/202505/tigrinho%20estrela%20bet">tigrinho estrela bet</a>
    <a href="https://[redacted].br/game/202505/in%20flames%20soundtrack%20to%20your%20escape%20torrent">in f
    </div>
  </div>
  <!-- End: custom user content -->

  <!-- Translations for JS -->
</head>
<body
  class="tri-layout ">
```

Compromised site: Googlebot view explained

This is content that will be served locally

- it is not in the filesystem
- it is dynamically generated by the C2
- It is only served if the access is via a search engine

These are links to other compromised websites

- it is also dynamically generated by the C2

```

    });^M
</script><div class="sitemap">
  <h1>Sitemaps</h1>
  <div class="urls">
    <a href="/ios/202505/good%20slots">good slots</a>
    <a href="/ios/202505/gold%20casino%20game%20777">gold casino game 777</a>
    <a href="/game/2025-05/estados%20unidos%20basquete%20jogo">estados unidos basquete jogo</a>
    <a href="/app/202505/gazovik%20orenburg%20x%20cska">gazovik orenburg x cska</a>
    <a href="/game/202505/cassino%20em%20cuba">cassino em cuba</a>
    <a href="/video/2025-05/barcelona%20e%20real%20sociedad">barcelona e real sociedad</a>
    <a href="/game/202505/macaca">macaca</a>
    <a href="/android/202505/7.bet%20entrar">7.bet entrar</a>
    <a href="/ios/202505/lol%20dl">lol dl</a>
    <a href="/ios/202505/baixar%20lobo888">baixar lobo888</a>
    <a href="/android/202505/aviator%20horarios">aviator horarios</a>
    <a href="https://[redacted].br/app/2025-05/jogos%20campeonato%20brasileiro">jogos campeonato brasileiro</a>
    <a href="https://[redacted].gov.br/android/202505/numeros%20da%20sorte%20para%20mega%20da%20virada%202023">numeros da
    sorte para mega da virada 2023</a>
    <a href="http://[redacted].edu.br/video/2025-05/grafico%20lobo888">grafico lobo888</a>
    <a href="http://[redacted].br/video/202505/o&#039;que%20%C3%A9%20saque%20corre">o&#039;que é saque corre</a>
    <a href="https://[redacted].br/static/help.jsp?ios=202505%2Fjogos%20de%20pr%C3%A9-ol%C3%ADmpico">jogos de pré-olím
    pico</a>
    <a href="https://[redacted].edu.br/ios/202505/grupo%20telegram%20f12%20bet">grupo telegram f12 bet</a>
    <a href="http://[redacted].br/sigaa/public/programa/index.jsp?android=202505%2Funo%20jogo%20online">uno
    jogo online</a>
    <a href="https://[redacted].edu.br/ios/202505/jogo%20rainha%20777">jogo rainha 777</a>
    <a href="http://[redacted].edu.br/game/2025-05/jogos%20de%20pintar">jogos de pintar</a>
    <a href="https://[redacted].com.br/android/202505/tigrinho%20estrela%20bet">tigrinho estrela bet</a>
    <a href="https://[redacted].br/game/202505/in%20flames%20soundtrack%20to%20your%20escape%20torrent">in f
    lames soundtrack to your escape torrent</a>
  </div>
</div>
<!-- End: custom user content -->

<!-- Translations for JS -->
</head>
<body
  class="tri-layout ">

```

Compromised site: “local content” with no referer

```
$ curl -L -s 'https://[victim].edu.br/video/2025-05/barcelona%20e%20real%20sociedad' | grep -A2 -i 'page not found'
```

```
<h1 class="list-heading">Page Not Found</h1>
```

```
<h5>Sorry, The page you were looking for could not be found.</h5>
```

```
<p>If you expected this page to exist, you might not have permission to view it.</p>
```

```
</div>
```


Compromised site:

“local content” with `www.google.com.br` as the referer

```
$ curl -L -s -e "https://www.google.com.br/" 'https://[victim].edu.br/video/2025-05/barcelona%20e%20real%20sociedad'
<!DOCTYPE html>
[...]  
<script>  
  let countdown = 5;  
  let countdownEl = document.querySelector('.countdown');  
  
  // 进度条动画  
  let progress = 0;  
  let interval = setInterval(() => {  
    progress += 20;  
    document.querySelector('.loader').style.width = progress + '%';  
    if (progress >= 100) {  
      clearInterval(interval);  
    }  
  }, 1000);  
  
  // 倒计时功能  
  let countdownInterval = setInterval(() => {  
    countdown--;  
    countdownEl.textContent = countdown;  
  
    if (countdown <= 0) {  
      clearInterval(countdownInterval);  
      window.location.href = 'https://www.br788cc.com/?ch=12942';  
    }  
  }, 1000);  
  
  // 按钮点击事件, 手动跳转  
  document.getElementById('btn').onclick = () => {  
    window.location.href = 'https://www.br788cc.com/?ch=12942';  
  };  
</script>  
[...]
```

Challenges

- It is not “one malware”
- Multiple
 - C2s and modules/scripts
 - operating systems
 - webservers
 - setups
- Lack of response from website admins
 - The few that respond are not able to find the root cause of the compromise
 - several remove the modules/scripts, and in 2 or 3 days later are compromised again
- Reports from **international campaigns are very different** from the scenario we are seeing in Brazil

Recommendations

- Regularly visit your webserver and compare with the Googlebot view

```
$ curl -L -s https://[your_site]/ > normal-view.html
```

```
$ curl -L -s -A Googlebot https://[your_site]/ > googlebot-view.html
```

```
$ diff normal-view.html googlebot-view.html
```

- Enable network **monitoring of outbound traffic**, preferably `netflow`
 - Look for connections from webserver to C2 servers
 - Identify other servers compromised connecting to the same C2
- To really recover from a compromise, **you must identify the root cause**
 - Was a vulnerability exploited?
 - OS? Webserver? CMS?
 - Infostealer at the website admin computer?
 - A combination of the above?
 - Something else?

Thank You!

Tak!

@ Incident reports to: cert@cert.br

X [@certbr](https://twitter.com/certbr)

<https://cert.br/>

nic.br **cgi.br**

www.nic.br | www.cgi.br