

Huge Data Breach in Florida Already has ID Theft Victims

October 10, 2012 - A huge data breach at Northwest Florida State College produced its first ID theft victims before the breach could even be announce. Nearly 300,000 people had their personal information stolen in the breach by computer hackers. The breach included 76,000 current and past students, 200,000 Bright Futures Scholars from across the entire state of Florida, and 3,000 employees of the school.

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(function() {
var s = document.createElement('SCRIPT'), s1 = document.getElementsByTagName('SCRIPT')[0];
s.type = 'text/javascript';
s.src = 'http://widgets.digg.com/buttons.js';
s1.parentNode.insertBefore(s, s1);
})();
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(function() {
var po = document.createElement('script'); po.type = 'text/javascript'; po.async = true;
po.src = 'https://apis.google.com/js/plusone.js';
var s = document.getElementsByTagName('script')[0]; s.parentNode.insertBefore(po, s);
})();
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The data that was breached was highly sensitive. It included names, addresses, phone numbers, Social Security numbers, birth dates—absolutely everything needed to commit identity theft. Unfortunately for employees of the school, the information leaked also contained bank account information for those with direct deposit. According to media reports, 60 employees have had their bank accounts accessed and money withdrawn without their permission.

The school has setup a website with information about the breach that can be found at <http://www.nwfsc.edu/security/>. The site contains news releases from the school as well as information about filing police reports and notifying appropriate credit agencies.

ACCESS is advising both current and past students to notify a credit reporting agency and, at a minimum, place a fraud alert on their credit file. Anyone who does not need instant access to credit is strongly advised to freeze their credit file. This is the only way to prevent credit related identity theft.

The same advice applies to anyone who was a recent Bright Futures Scholar. If you fall into this category, you may want to contact the school directly to see if your information was included in the breach. The school didn't provide contact information for this specific purpose but they did provide email addresses for both employees and current students to use. Those addresses are registrar@nwfsc.edu and humanresources@nwfsc.edu.

by Jim Malmberg

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