

A Bad Couple of Weeks for Data Breaches

October 8, 2015 — The past two weeks are littered with corporate data breaches; exposing the personally identifiable information of close to 20 million people. Companies involved include T-Mobile, Experian and Scott Trade. As bad as this is, you'll never believe how one of these companies found out their computer systems were under attack.

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  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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  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);  
})();
```

In fairness to T-Mobile, the company doesn't appear to be responsible for the breach of customer data. Experian appears to be able to take all of the credit here.

T-Mobile was using Experian to check the credit of new clients. All reports indicate that the executive leadership team at T-Mobile is absolutely furious about this breach. Experian was housing a database of T-Mobile customers, which is what hackers gained access to. There was apparently no breach of Experian's own database.

The information that the hackers gained access to include everything needed to commit identity theft. The breach involved two years of data; from September of 2013 to last month.

Anyone who believes that their information could have been compromised in the breach can find more information about it by reading Experian's FAQ on this incident.

The good news about the Scottrade data breach is that the hackers appear to have only gained access to the names of the company's customers. The company is saying that they don't believe that enough information to commit identity theft.

or fraud. In fact, the company isn't even advising its customers to change their passwords since that data is encrypted and they don't believe it was compromised.

The bad news is the Scottrade only found out about the breach when the FBI showed up knocking on their door. They didn't discover it themselves, which raises some serious questions about the company's data security monitoring. This breach exposed the names of 4.5 million Scottrade customers.

The companies involved in these data breaches are offering customers a free year of credit monitoring. T-Mobile customers whose data was released in the breach should seriously consider freezing their credit files to prevent any future identity theft.

by Jim Malmberg

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