Elon Musk, DOGE, and the Privacy Panic: The Truth Behind the Hysteria

February 19, 2025 - Over the past couple of weeks there have been a flurry of news reports regarding Elon Musk and his DOGE team being given access to the personally identifiable information (PII) of virtually everyone living in the United States. Mainstream media and Democrat politicians have been nearly catatonic over DOGEâ€™s access to US Treasury and Social Security payment systems. And a number of lawsuits have been filed to try to stop their access. But the truth is that DOGE isnâ€™t being given access to any information that isnâ€™t already available to anyone who really wants it, and all o the hysterics are really pretty ridiculous.

For an organization like ACCESS that has a focus on financial privacy, you may think our position on this is a little strange. So let us explain.

First of all, there is a pretty good chance that the federal government has already leaked your personal information in a data breach. After all, the federal government has an absolutely horrible reputation when it comes to protecting the PII of American citizens. Here are just a few examples of the data breaches theyâ€™ve been a part of:

Â· U.S. Voter Database: 191 million affected. Information leaked: Voter registration details, including names, addresses, and voting history.

Â· National Archives and Records Administration (NARA): 76 million affected. Information leaked: Personal information of military veterans, including Social Security numbers and addresses.

Â· U.S. Department of Veteran Affairs: 26.5 million affected. Information leaked: Personal information of veterans, including Social Security numbers, names, and addresses.

Â· U.S. Office of Personnel Management (OPM): 21.5 million affected. Information leaked: Personal information of federal employees, including Social Security numbers, addresses, and fingerprints.

Â· U.S. Department of Defense (DoD): 4.2 million affected. Information leaked: Personal information of military personnel, including Social Security numbers, names, and addresses.

And less than a year ago, a hacking group calling itself USDoD managed to gain access to a private database containing the PII of 2.9 billion people worldwide. That database included the Social Security numbers and other personal information on virtually every single person in the United States. The entire database from that hack is available for sale on the dark web for $3.5 million.

The point here is that if the worldâ€™s richest man - Elon Musk - wanted access to your information for nefarious purposes, heâ€™d have no problem getting access to it.

Secondly, Musk is one of the co-founders of PayPal. While in that position, tens of millions of people trusted him enough to just hand over their PII to him, and that was when he was nowhere near as wealthy as he is today. If he was trustworthy then, and didnâ€™t steal his customers information for personal gain, then heâ€™s probably even more trustworthy now.

Third, and perhaps most importantly, Musk and DOGE arenâ€™t this rogue, ramshackle group of people that are out to gain access to our personal data. That is how many in the media, and a good number of politicians are painting them, but it simply isnâ€™t true. They are now government employees, and Musk reports directly to the President. As government employees, they are supervised and have to follow the law, including privacy laws.

The entire purpose behind DOGE is to cut government waste. And from the looks of it, they are being successful. They are also ruffling a lot of feathers... especially among the political class. The logical question is, why? Why are politicians and the media arguing so vociferously against cutting wasteful government spending? And how can they justify their arguments in the eyes of the general public?

Our response to that is that we hope that DOGE follows the money. We suspect that some of the people who are screaming the loudest are actually benefitting from that wasteful spending. If that does turn out to be the case, Musk and the DOGE team are hovering right over the target.

by Jim Malmberg

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