



Security and Privacy Tips Following New Massive Data Leak

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A massive data leak containing over 20 billion records was reported in late January, 2024. This was not a single leak, but a compilation of records from thousands of previous leaks, breaches and privately sold databases.

Major sites included: MySpace, Twitter, LinkedIn, Adobe, Canva, Dropbox, Snapchat, etc.

First announced by Vilius Petkauskas, Deputy Editor, <https://cybernews.com/>

See the updated article at: <https://cybernews.com/security/billions-passwords-credentials-leaked-mother-of-all-breaches/>

Risk

The leaked information is considered extremely dangerous.

It could be leveraged for identity theft, phishing schemes, cyberattacks as well as unauthorized access to your personal accounts.

Reasons You May Not Recognize The Listed Websites

- From a service you used in the past and don't recall.
- Your data may have been stolen and sold on marketplaces or to data brokers. (Explains some spam emails and texts.)
- Hackers may have used data stolen from one site to try to log into other sites or set up accounts.
- Your information (i.e. email address) may have been used by a close family member or friend unbeknownst to you.

Websites Where You Can Check

You can check all of your email address at these and other websites:

- <https://cybernews.com/personal-data-leak-check/>
- <https://haveibeenpwned.com/>
- <https://www.malwarebytes.com/digital-footprint> (email reply and sales pitch involved)

The following tips and suggestions can help enhance your computer security and help protect against various cybersecurity threats as well as increase your privacy.

Tips and Suggestions

After checking, we strongly recommend that you

- change your passwords on the sites that leaked data,
- always use new strong, unique passwords,
- use secure password managers,
- enable two-factor authentication,
- consider using passkeys where available,
- install a virtual private network (VPN) for added security and privacy, etc.

We also advise that you:

- regularly check to ensure your operating systems, browsers, programs/apps, plugins and extensions, etc. are up to date,
- back these all up regularly,
- Windows users: set a restore point regularly (especially before downloading and installing programs), make a recovery drive and a repair disk.
- Mac users can use Time Machine.

- follow the 3-2-1 principle for copying your important files, images and videos: 3 copies (original plus two copies) – on 2 different media - 1 should be off-site (away from your home or office).
- Windows computers should have current virus and malware software installed and working on your computer and scan or check regularly.

When browsing you should:

- be mindful of HTTPS or lock signs on website URLs
- keep your personal information limited and professional,
- avoid sharing personal information on social media,
- keep privacy settings on,
- consider using more private browsers and search engines such as DuckDuckGo, Brave, Firefox (and Firefox containers), Tor, etc.
- set up separate email addresses to register or subscribe to sites,
- use a Google voice phone instead of your regular cellphone or landline, also to register,
- practice safe browsing habits, as we frequently discuss, to recognize and avoid scams, phishing, malware and virus downloads, phony email addresses, etc.
- clear cookies and the web browser cache

In addition:

- be cautious with email and downloads,
- do not open images routinely, in fact change settings to give permission to display all images before opening,
- mouse over suspicious email addresses to reveal actual senders,
- use filters to send suspicious emails to purgatory,
- avoid public Wi-Fi for sensitive activities.

We know all this may be confusing. We have developed over 125 helpful PDFs and videos with easy to follow instructions to guide you in many of these tasks. Request a link for a specific topic or we can send you a file.

Senior Planet from AARP Hotline: 888-713-3495 - Mon-Fri. 9am-8pm Eastern

‘Apple Addicts’: Email Dave Taenzer at dtaenzer@gmail.com

Thank You! Judy & Michael



Making Technology Fun (and Safe)

Join us at WACI (Windows–Android–Computers–Internet) Mondays on Senior Planet | Updates, Tips, Humor from Judy, Answers to your Questions, etc.

2:00 PM Pacific, 3:00 PM Mountain, 4:00 PM Central, 5:00 PM Eastern

<https://seniorplanet.org/classes/>

<https://seniorplanet.zoom.us/j/86380839238>

email us for links for Senior Planet breaks and Holiday meetings:

WACITips@gmail.com

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