

Yahoo breach reaches Gmail, Hotmail, AOL

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FILES)The Yahoo homepage is seen on a computer screen in Washington, DC in this October 19, 2010 file photo. Struggling Internet pioneer Yahoo! has admitted to making an "inadvertent error" after an activist shareholder pointed out that its CEO's online bio wrongly said he had a degree in computer science. Until late May 3, 2012, the company's website had said Chief Executive Officer Scott Thompson had received a bachelor's degree in accounting and computer science from Stonehill College, the Wall Street Journal reported. Yahoo! later admitted, however, that Thompson had received a bachelor of science degree in business administration with a major in accounting from Stonehill, a Catholic School near Boston. By early May 4, 2012, the website biography did not contain any reference to Thompson's educational background. AFP PHOTO/Nicholas KAMM/NICHOLAS KAMM/AFP/GettyImages Photo: Nicholas Kamm, AFP/Getty Images / SF

A security breach exposed 450,000 user names and passwords for accounts at Yahoo and other Internet services such as Google's Gmail, [Microsoft Hotmail](#) and AOL, Yahoo said Thursday.

A file containing log-in credentials for Yahoo and other accounts was stolen Wednesday from a Yahoo site featuring user articles, videos and slide shows, the company said.

"At Yahoo, we take security very seriously and invest heavily in protective measures to ensure the security of our users and their data across all our products," a statement from the Sunnyvale company said. "We are taking immediate action by fixing the vulnerability that led to the disclosure of this data, changing the passwords of the affected Yahoo users and notifying the companies whose users accounts may have been compromised. We apologize to all affected users."

Yahoo spokeswoman [Kate Wesson](#) said the company has 298 million active Yahoo e-mail users worldwide. That means the breach affected less than 1 percent of users.

The hacking occurred just a day after San Francisco social network Formspring was forced to reset passwords for all of its 28 million members after hackers posted password information to about 420,000 accounts online. Just a month ago, a similar breach affected the passwords of 6.5 million members of professional social network LinkedIn of Mountain View.

Reuters reported that a hacker group called D33DS had posted online details of 450,000 user accounts and passwords that it claimed were taken from a Yahoo server.

TrustedSec, a Berea, Ohio, security consultancy that reviewed the list of breached e-mail addresses, reported on its blog that the addresses included accounts from AOL and Hotmail. The [New York Times](#) reported that the breach may also extend to users of Comcast, MSN, [SBC Global](#), Verizon, [BellSouth](#) and Live.com.

In a statement it posted on the site, the D33DS group said the hack was a wake-up call to Yahoo and others about the vulnerabilities in their networks.

"There have been many security holes exploited in Web servers belonging to Yahoo Inc. that have caused far greater damage than our disclosure," it read. "Please do not take them lightly."

The hackers made efforts to mask which Yahoo site the stolen passwords came from, but inadvertently left clues in the file that point to the Yahoo Voices site as the source of the breach, TrustedSec wrote.

The breached site was formerly known as Associated Content, a site for user-generated content that Yahoo bought in 2010 and rebranded last year.

Many of the victims may have been Associated Content users who signed up for the service before Yahoo turned it into Yahoo Voices, said [Kurt Baumgartner](#), a security researcher at Russian antivirus firm [Kaspersky Lab](#). That probably explains why non-Yahoo e-mail accounts were among the breached data, as users could sign up for the service with a variety of e-mail accounts, he said.

[Anna Brading](#), a blogger with Sophos Naked Security, said the list of compromised websites "just seems to keep growing."

"In a little over a month, we've reported on breaches of Formspring, Last.fm, LinkedIn and eHarmony," she noted, advising: "If you use Yahoo Voices, you should probably change your password now."

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