



1.2 Billion Usernames/Passwords Stolen — Change Your Internet Passwords

I. Klein, CISSP, CISM, CIPP/US

August 6, 2014

There have been a lot of media reports about a Russian crime ring that created a huge database of stolen usernames, passwords, and email addresses. Here are a few FAQs so you can protect yourself.

What Happened?

A Wisconsin-based security company discovered a database containing about 1.2 billion unique user credentials and half a billion email addresses. They think the data was collected by a Russian crime ring from many different data breaches that occurred all over the world in the last months. This is considered the single biggest amount of stolen Internet identity information ever collected.

Which Sites' Information Is In the Database?

While the security company would not disclose which sites' information was breached to build the credentials database, they said, "The Hackers did not just target U.S. companies, they targeted any website they could get, ranging from Fortune 500 companies to very small websites."

Does This Impact Me?

We don't know, but probably. It's estimated that about 66.5% of the records in the database contain information on U.S. citizens (546.8 million records).

What Should I Do?

The most important thing to do is change your work password(s) and any personal password(s) for online accounts and activities that involve your personal or financial information. For example, don't bother changing a password for a website where you just login just to read articles. But definitely change passwords for online banking, shopping, utility, medical/insurance, and other sites. ***And use different passwords!*** Do not reuse the same passwords for the different sites.

How Do I Remember All the Different Passwords?

There are some tricks to creating long, strong, easy-to-remember passwords. For example, pick a word, like *phoenix*. For your AZ Federal banking password, use *AZFederal-ph0en1x*. For your Gmail account password, use *Gmail-ph0en1x*, and for your eBay account, use *eBay-ph0en1x*. For more tricks, see [Password Cracking 101](#) and [Password Management 201](#).