

Online Media Sector

Source: Deloitte Report



Case 1

Email addresses stolen from an email service provider

Organization

A company that provides email services for more than 2,000 large organizations in all sectors, sending billions of marketing and customer communications emails annually.

Scenario

An unknown group of hackers breached the company's databases and stole nearly 60 million email addresses.

Attackers and motivation

Little is publicly known about the attackers. They might have been "script kiddies" hacking for fun, organized criminals planning to use the email addresses for spear phishing attacks, or perhaps a competitor trying to embarrass the company.

Techniques used

Although the exact technique has not been disclosed, experts believe it was something simple, such as SQL injection. This might explain why the company has been reluctant to share details about the attack.

Business impact

Although this breach only involved names and email addresses, not financial information, it was very damaging because it was directly related to the company's core business of sending marketing emails on behalf of clients. Also, the sheer size of the data loss drew a lot of attention from the media. The company was forced to notify all affected clients, who in turn had to notify their own customers, since this massive leakage of email addresses exposed them to spear phishing attacks. This made both the company and its clients look bad. In tangible terms, this breach cost the company and its clients an estimated \$200 million in customer compensation.