

2012 LinkedIn Data Breach Apparently Still Creating Problems

May 19, 2016 – This morning when I walked into my office, as is my usual habit the first thing I did was check my email. Much to my chagrin, there was a message from LinkedIn telling me that that I should change my password because the company had detected an outside security threat to my account.

Tweet

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(function() {
var s = document.createElement('SCRIPT'), s1 = document.getElementsByTagName('SCRIPT')[0];
s.type = 'text/javascript';
s.src = 'http://widgets.digg.com/buttons.js';
s1.parentNode.insertBefore(s, s1);
})();
```

```
(function() {
var po = document.createElement('script'); po.type = 'text/javascript'; po.async = true;
po.src = 'https://apis.google.com/js/plusone.js';
var s = document.getElementsByTagName('script')[0]; s.parentNode.insertBefore(po, s);
})();
```

Frankly, I didn't take the message too seriously. In fact – and this will give you some insight as to how I think – I suspect that the message was a well-designed phishing attack; trying to get me to click on a link in the message only to have my computer infected with some horrible virus, or designed to steal my LinkedIn account information! Something like that. So I set the message aside figuring that I'd take a look at it later in the day if I had some free time.

Well, that free time showed up about an hour ago. That's when I decided to take another look at the message. And that's when I realized that the message contained absolutely no links at all. I simply instructed me to go to LinkedIn and change my password. It was no fake.

A quick search revealed what I already suspected. LinkedIn had experienced a data breach. But according to the information I found, the breach is apparently four years old and affects 117 million LinkedIn users. Here is a brief rundown of what happened and what you need to do to protect yourself.

In 2012, there was a LinkedIn data breach that was thought to have affected 6.5 million of the company's users. According to a hacker using the name –œPeace–, the breach was actually much larger. It involved 165 million names, of which 117 million had accessible passwords.

All of the names and passwords were contained in a single file. –œPeace– has now put that file up for sale on the internet, offering it to anyone who is willing to pay around \$2,200. There is no telling how many copies have been sold so far.

From the looks of it, Peace's claim to the file is a good one. A third party group has been able to get its hands on a portion of the file and contacted several LinkedIn users who have been able to verify that the passwords in the file are good.

For anyone in business, this breach could be a bit of a disaster. If someone knows your LinkedIn user name and

password they can hijack your account. For avid users of LinkedIn, that means they can gain access to any communications – including confidential communications – you have sent or received via LinkedIn. They can see who your friends and clients are. They can send communications in your name. If they want to, they can try to harm your business and your reputation.

Because of this, we’re telling our readers that if you use LinkedIn, you should change your password NOW. Don’t wait until it’s too late. There is really no telling how much damage someone can do to you if they gain access to your LinkedIn account.

by Jim Malmberg

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