AT&T notifies users of data breach and resets millions of passcodes

March 31 2024, by Matt O'brien

An AT&T sign is seen at a store in Pittsburgh, Monday, Jan. 30, 2023. AT&T said, Saturday, March 30, 2024, it has begun notifying millions of customers about the theft of personal data recently discovered online. Credit: AP Photo/Gene J. Puskar, File
AT&T said it has begun notifying millions of customers about the theft of personal data recently discovered online.

The telecommunications giant said Saturday that a dataset found on the "dark web" contains information such as Social Security numbers for about 7.6 million current AT&T account holders and 65.4 million former account holders.

The company said it has already reset the passcodes of current users and will be communicating with account holders whose sensitive personal information was compromised.

It is not known if the data "originated from AT&T or one of its vendors," the company said in a statement. The compromised data is from 2019 or earlier and does not appear to include financial information or call history, it said. In addition to passcodes and Social Security numbers, it may include email and mailing addresses, phone numbers and birth dates.

While the data surfaced on a hacking forum nearly two weeks ago, it closely resembles a similar data breach that surfaced in 2021 but which AT&T never acknowledged, said cybersecurity researcher Troy Hunt.

"If they assess this and they made the wrong call on it, and we've had a course of years pass without them being able to notify impacted customers," then it's likely the company will soon face class action lawsuits, said Hunt, founder of an Australia-based website for warning people when their personal information has been exposed.

An AT&T spokesperson didn't immediately return a request for comment Saturday.

It is not the first crisis this year for the Dallas-based company. An outage
in February temporarily knocked out cellphone service for thousands of U.S. users. AT&T at the time blamed the incident on a technical coding error, not a malicious attack.

© 2024 The Associated Press. All rights reserved. This material may not be published, broadcast, rewritten or redistributed without permission.

Citation: AT&T notifies users of data breach and resets millions of passcodes (2024, March 31) retrieved 5 April 2024 from https://techxplore.com/news/2024-03-att-notifies-users-breach-resets.html

This document is subject to copyright. Apart from any fair dealing for the purpose of private study or research, no part may be reproduced without the written permission. The content is provided for information purposes only.