

23andMe, the genetic and ancestry kit with millions of users, has confirmed a massive data leak. Names, F email addresses, photos and DNA information of many of its users are for sale on the Dark Web. What does this mean and what should 23andMe users do next?

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SUPERS

0-8 Jamey Tucker/whatthetech.tv
40-48 Boyd Clewis/Cybersecurity Expert

ON-CAMERA TEASE

Having your usernames and passwords stolen is one thing, but having your DNA information stolen? I'm Jamey Tucker coming up with what you need to know about the 23andMe data leak even if you're not a customer.

ANCHOR INTRO

IF YOU'VE EVER SIGNED UP AND USED THE 23-AND-ME TO FIND RELATIVES IN YOUR FAMILY TREE YOUR PERSONAL INFORMATION MAY BE AT RISK.

THE BIOTECH COMPANY CONFIRMS USERNAMES AND PASSWORDS WERE RECENTLY COMPROMISED. BUT IT COULD BE MORE THAN JUST USERNAMES AND PASSWORDS. AS OUR CONSUMER TECHNOLOGY REPORTER JAMEY TUCKER EXPLAINS, DNA INFORMATION MAY BE AVAILABLE ON THE DARK WEB.

PACKAGE SCRIPT

Customers submit DNA samples to 23andMe to find where their family came from, who they're related to, and what illnesses they're susceptible to because of genetics. That information may be for sale on the dark web.

23andMe confirmed profile information was taken that includes usernames, passwords, gender, photo, relatives in common, and the percentage of DNA you share with them.

"It's terrifying and it's one of those things that, This is so new I can't even fathom right now what the implications are of that, I just now that if I was part of that compromise, I'd be freaking out right now.

cyber security expert Boyd Clewis tells me how hackers could use this information

"Think of how many password reset questions they have. what's your grandmother's name, what street did you grow up on, that information is revealed in those profiles.

23andMe customers submit saliva samples that are sent off to the 23 and Me labs where it is matched with other DNA from around the world. It also can be shared with GED Match which

can match DNA with people who haven't submitted samples themselves. It's how police caught the Golden State Killer when his DNA was linked from other relatives and to the crime scene 32 years earlier.

So is it possible that your DNA information is at risk because someone in your family tree spit in a tube?

It shows all of my family that's connected to me because it is ingrained in that profile. and I would definitely say it is very likely that now, not only do they have that person's DNA information, but also relatives.

it isn't enough just to change the 23andMe password but for any accounts that use the same password. Clewis said 23andMe customers should sign up for credit monitoring ASAP. That's What the Tech? I'm Jamey Tucker

ANCHOR TAG

23 AND ME TOLD US THEY ARE CONTINUING TO INVESTIGATE AND THEY'RE WORKING WITH FORENSIC EXPERTS AND FEDERAL LAW ENFORCEMENT. THE COMPANY SAYS IT WILL NOTIFY CUSTOMERS IF THEIR INFORMATION WAS ACCESSED WITHOUT THEIR PERMISSION.

WEB STORY

Biotech company 23andMe, which matches DNA samples with others, [confirms](#) that the profile information of some of its customers has been acquired by "threat actors". The information is from customers who've opted into 23andMe's "[DNA Relatives feature](#)" which allows customers to find and connect with genetic relatives who are also 23andMe customers.

23andMe is one of several companies where people submit their own DNA samples through saliva. Customers purchase in-home kits and participate for various reasons. Perhaps chief among those reasons is out of curiosity about their family's origin and identifying family members. Others use the kit to find out if their genetics makes them susceptible to certain illnesses.

Multiple reports found a threat actor advertising the stolen profiles on the Dark Web asking for thousands of dollars from anyone interested in purchasing the usernames and passwords.

"It's terrifying," said cyber security expert [Boyd Clewis](#). "It's one of those things that, this is so new I can't even fathom right now what the implications are of that, like what can be done with the data. I just know that if I was part of that compromise, I'd be freaking out right now.

Clewis said the profile information itself poses a great risk just for the information it offers. "Think of how many password reset questions they have. What's your grandmother's name, what street did you grow up on, that information is revealed in those profiles."

An even greater concern is the DNA information itself.

Along with 23andMe's Relative feature, users can also submit information to GED Match that can match one's DNA to others around the globe, even if they didn't sign up for 23andMe.

It's a tool police used a few years ago to catch the [Golden State Killer](#) who police say was responsible for multiple rapes and murders in California between 1974 and 1986. Investigators accessed the DNA database that linked family members who'd shared their DNA through one of the DNA kits such as 23andMe with GED Match.

In that case, police had the DNA evidence from the crime scene that linked James DeAngelo with family members who'd submitted their DNA information with GEDMatch.

I asked Clewis if a hacker gets their hands on someone's DNA information, could it link to the DNA from people who didn't use one of the kits themselves?

"It shows all of my family that's connected to me because it is ingrained in that profile. And I would definitely say it is very likely that now, not only do they have that person's DNA information, but also relatives."

23andMe says the compromised profiles were of customers who re-used the same password on multiple accounts. It is re-setting the passwords for all of its users as a precaution and encouraging them to use 2-factor authentication.

Changing the 23andMe password isn't enough though. Customers should also change the passwords for their other accounts if they used the same password. Clewis also says 23andMe users should sign up for credit monitoring as soon as possible.

23andMe said in a blog post it is working with law enforcement and third-party forensics experts to investigate and that it will notify any user if their profile information was compromised.