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Facebook Data Breach: Victims will not be Offered Free Identity Theft Protection

Facebook announced that the recent data breach it has suffered is a little less massive than initially thought: “only” 30 million users have been affected. But, although highly personal information has been harvested from the profiles of 14 million victims, Facebook has told the BBC that it does not plan, at this time, to provide them with free identity theft protection services. On Friday, while still insisting on calling this data breach a “security incident,” the company’s VP of Product Management Guy Rosen explained that “the attackers exploited a vulnerability in Facebook’s code that existed between July 2017 and September 2018,” that allowed them to steal Facebook access tokens, which they could then use to take over people’s accounts. Those 14 million users that had their profile thoroughly mined for personal information are now in grave danger: the attackers can use the information to mount identity theft attacks; extremely targeted phishing attacks via email, SMS, or phone calls; or attempt to hijack their various accounts (the information can come in handy when guessing passwords, answering security questions or impersonating the victim in communications with user support staff). Unfortunately for them, Facebook will not be offering identity theft protection services to any of them at this time. Instead, they’ll get customized messages explaining “what information the attackers might have accessed, as well as steps they can take to help protect themselves, including from suspicious emails, text messages, or calls,” and they will be pointed to the social network’s Help Center. Users can visit the page to immediately find out whether they’ve been affected by the breach.