

# **Facebook Data Breach**

## Why in news?

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Facebook has put out more details about the data breach that exploited a vulnerability in its code between July 2017 and September 2018.

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## What is the recent picture on data breach?

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- $\bullet$  Facebook has claimed that fewer users 30 million, not 50 million had their access tokens stolen by exploiting 400,000 accounts.
- But crucially, the new revelation is that 15 million of the 30 had their name and contact details (phone numbers or e-mails) stolen.
- This was depending on what people had on their profiles.
- Another 14 million had details like gender, relationship status, their birth date, recent searches, and the last 10 places the person had checked into or were tagged in stolen.

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- This was along with name and contact details like others.
- Just 1 million of the 30 had none of their data compromised.
- But Messenger, Messenger Kids, Instagram, WhatsApp, Oculus, Workplace, Pages, payments, third-party apps, or advertising or developer accounts have not been affected.

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#### How was it done?

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• The attackers moved from account to account using an automated script collecting tokens.

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• This was done by repeatedly exploiting the vulnerability using access tokens for about 400,000 people.

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• The attackers then used the list of friends they collected to "eventually steal access tokens for about 30 million people.

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• So starting with the accounts they controlled directly, they moved to their friends and to their friends' friends, and so forth.

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ullet The attackers could see things about users like-

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i. posts on their Timelines

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ii. their list of Friends

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 ${\it iii.}$  groups they're members of

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iv. the names of some recent Messenger conversations

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- Facebook claims that the message content was not available to attackers.
- But even this could have been seen if the person was Page admin and had received a message from someone.

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### What next?

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 Facebook is sending customised messages to the 30 million users, suggesting steps to protect themselves.

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- On the Facebook Help Center, users can check if they have been affected and what information may have been accessed.
- $\bullet$  Reportedly, accounts have already been secured by what Facebook did recently when they prompted millions of users to reset the access tokens. \n
- $\bullet$  So no one needs to log out again or change passwords.  $\ensuremath{\backslash n}$
- But the risk is that stolen data could be used to target phishing mails etc to the users, knowing their preferences.
- $\bullet$  So users have to be careful of suspicious e-mails, text messages or calls that could be made using this information.  $\mbox{\sc have}$

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# **Source: Indian Express**

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