

Safeguarding against iCloud or Gmail online hacking attack

It was recently reported that approximately five million account credentials were published that have a Gmail address as the user name.



Carey van Vlaanderen, CEO of ESET Southern Africa

In most cases, passwords were at least five years old and outdated. However, not all were so lucky, and there were reports of attempts to use credentials. The assumption is that this comprised data is a collection obtained by phishing campaigns or malware attacks over recent years, says Carey van Vlaanderen, CEO of ESET Southern Africa.

Gmail accounts being hacked can be burdensome - a gmail account being hacked allows intruders access to the various Google services including Google Maps, Google Documents, and Google giving access to services that could reveal personal information, including the users home address.

Van Vlaanderen advises anyone with a Gmail account to change their password immediately. It may be an inconvenience, but the hassle is less than what the outcome could be if a cyber-criminal gets into your account, with access to your bank information, your address and contact number, and other such sensitive information.

We also suggest implementing two-factor authentication (2FA) on your Google account, as an extra layer of precaution. In fact, this should be used for all accounts that contain sensitive information such as Facebook, Twitter and Dropbox.

Twitter and LinkedIn both added 2FA after high-profile attacks - systems vary, but usually involve either an automated SMS message, or an app which generates codes. After you enter your password, you will be asked for the code - or in some systems, you will use an app (separate from your browser) to enter the code.

2FA is more secure than passwords - many high profile hacks, such as the recent iCloud hack where nude photos of

celebrities were leaked, could not have happened if a 2FA system had been in place. Even if a hacker places malware on a PC and steals a password, they are still locked out.

Of course, there is no magic bullet, but it is a decent layer of security that makes you a smaller target for cyber-criminals.

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