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## IRS website attack nets e-filing credentials for 101,000 taxpayers

Breach comes a year after a previous hack compromised 300,000 people.

by Dan Goodin - Feb 10, 2016 6:47am PST

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The US Internal Revenue Service was the target of a malware attack that netted electronic tax-return credentials for 101,000 social security numbers, the agency disclosed Tuesday.

Identity thieves made the haul by using taxpayers' personal data that was stolen from a source outside the IRS, according to a [statement](#). The attackers then used an automated bot against an application on the IRS website that provides personal identification numbers for the electronic filing of tax returns. In all, the hackers made unauthorized queries against 464,000 social security numbers but succeeded against only 101,000 of them.

No personal information was obtained from the IRS systems. Agency officials are flagging the accounts of all affected taxpayers and plan to notify them by mail of the incident. The IRS is also working with other government agencies and industry partners to investigate the hack or stem its effects. The hack occurred last month.

The breach underscores just how easy it is for attackers to dredge up personal information for huge numbers of people. With the recent compromises of the US Office of Personnel Management and health insurers Anthem, Premera, CareFirst, and Excellus—to name just a small sampling—it's easy to see how a breach on one organization can provide hackers with enough raw data to compromise millions of accounts housed with unrelated organizations.

Last year, the [IRS experienced a breach](#) that allowed attackers to obtain personal information for more than 300,000 taxpayers. The hack targeted the IRS's Get Transcript Web application, which provided online access to previous year's tax return information. The data lost in last year's attack provided enough information to theoretically file fraudulent tax returns and credit applications.

When the [IRS first disclosed the compromise](#) last May, it estimated that the number of taxpayers was a little more than 100,000. Three months later, it arrived at the 300,000 figure. It wouldn't be surprising if the 101,000 estimate provided Tuesday is adjusted upward in the weeks or months to come.

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Get a record of your past tax returns, also referred to as transcripts. IRS transcripts are often used to validate income and tax filing status for mortgage applications, student and small business loan applications, and during tax preparation.

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A little background on this, and why the IRS is even more to blame than you realize. The IRS has been heavily pushing for technology when it comes to professional tax preparers like Accountants and CPAs. Over the last several years they have been setting a threshold on the number of paper returns that professionals are allowed to submit. Year by year they have been forcing more and more people to submit the e-filing forms instead.

To e-file an accountant or CPA has to register with the IRS. And a few years ago the IRS just gave away this registry to a number of companies. What was the purpose? These companies want to sell software and services to the accountants.

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My mom is a CPA and is 99% retired because she is sick and tired of the bullshit in dealing with the IRS. The information above is what I've heard her gripe about over the last 5 years. I was astonished hearing about the behavior.

There ius an old addage. When the IRS makes a mistake, you pay.

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The IRS has faced annual budget cuts for like 4 years running, and their workload increases every year with the population and our labrynthine tax code. They're hardly blameless, but they're doing a nearly impossible job because congress has avoided doing theirs.

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