Security Newsletter

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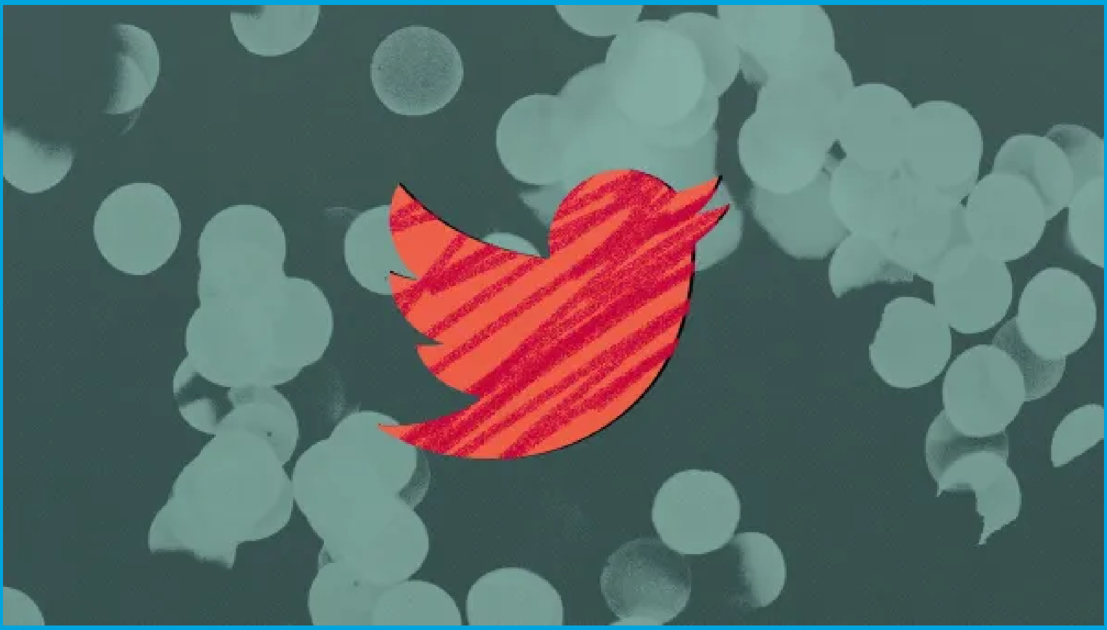
What Twitter's 200 Million-User Email Leak Actually Means



AFTER REPORTS AT the end of 2022 that hackers were selling data stolen from 400 million Twitter users, researchers now say that a widely circulated trove of email addresses linked to about 200 million users is likely a refined version of the larger trove with duplicate entries removed. The social network has not yet commented on the massive exposure, but the cache of data clarifies the severity of the leak and who may be most at risk as a result of it.

From June 2021 until January 2022, there was a bug in a Twitter application programming interface, or API, that allowed attackers to submit contact information like email addresses and receive the associated Twitter account, if any, in return. Before it was patched, attackers exploited the flaw to "scrape" data from the social network. And while the bug didn't allow hackers to access passwords or other sensitive information like DMs, it did expose the connection between Twitter accounts, which are often pseudonymous, and the email addresses and phone numbers linked to them, potentially identifying users.

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