



Security Newsletter

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How I gained commit access to Homebrew in 30 minutes



Homebrew

The missing package manager for macOS

"Since the recent NPM, RubyGems, and Gentoo incidents, I've become increasingly interested, and concerned, with the potential for package managers to be used in supply chain attacks to distribute malicious software. Specifically with how the maintainers and infrastructure of these projects can be targeted as an attack vector. On Jun 31st, I went in with the intention of seeing if I could gain access to Homebrew's GitHub repositories. About 30 minutes later, I made my first commit to Homebrew/homebrew-core."

GitHub Support was contacted and they verified the relevant token had not been used to perform any pushes to Homebrew/brew or Homebrew/homebrew-core during the period of elevated scopes. To be explicit: no packages were compromised and no action is required by users due to this incident.

If you're a Brew user, there's no need for alarm and no immediate action you need to take. Holmes disclosed this responsibly to the Homebrew crew, who fixed the issue right away – within a few hours, in fact – and published a short, frank and informative disclosure notice. As in the case of Gentoo's recent supply-chain breach, the disclosure notice is worth reading whether the incident directly affects you or not. Supply-chain attacks can have wide-reaching effects, so ask yourself, "What can I and my own organisation learn from this?"

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