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Security Newsletter

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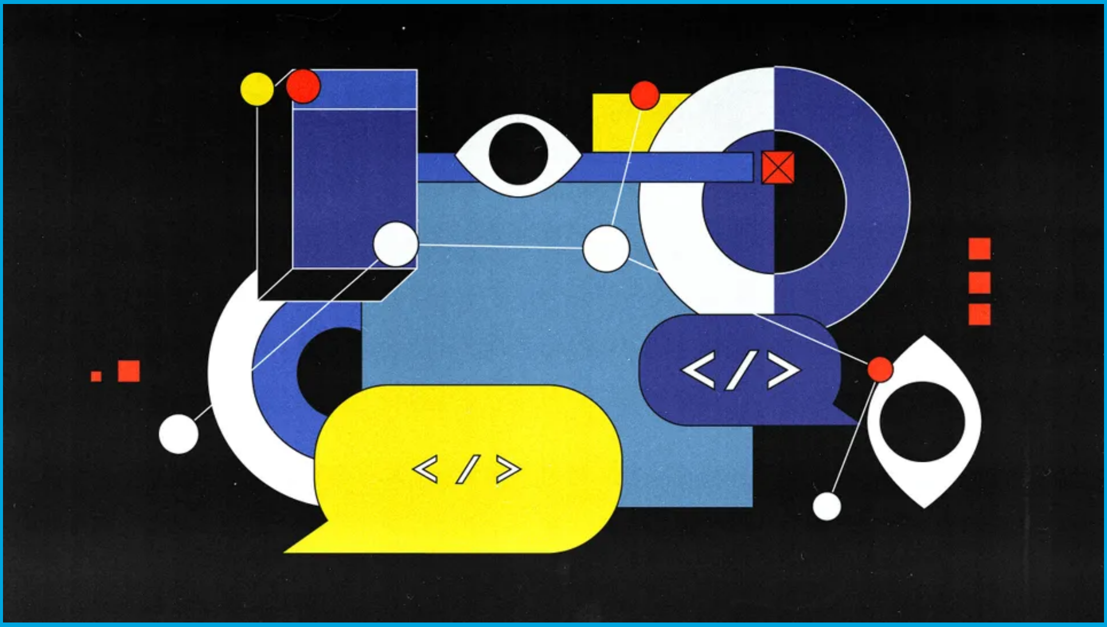
The Tricky Aftermath of Source Code Leaks



The LAPSUS$ digital extortion group is the latest to mount a high-profile data-stealing rampage against major tech companies. And among other things, the group is known for grabbing and leaking source code at every opportunity, including from Samsung, Qualcomm, and Nvidia. At the end of March, alongside revelations that they had breached an Okta subprocessor, the hackers also dropped a trove of data containing portions of the source code for Microsoft's Bing, Bing Maps, and its Cortana virtual assistant. Sounds bad, right?

Businesses, governments, and other institutions have been plagued by ransomware attacks, business email compromise, and an array other breaches in recent years. Researchers say, though, that while source code leaks may seem catastrophic, and certainly aren't good, they typically aren't the worst-case scenario of a criminal data breach.

Typically, security researchers and attackers alike must use “reverse engineering” to find exploitable vulnerabilities in software, working backward from the final product to understand its components and how it works. And researchers say that process can actually be more helpful than looking at source code for finding bugs, because it involves more creative and open-ended analysis than just looking at a recipe. Still, there's no doubt that source code leaks can be problematic, especially for organizations that haven't done enough auditing and vetting to be sure that they've caught most basic bugs.

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- Learning Machine Learning Part 1: Introduction and Revoke-Obfuscation
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