

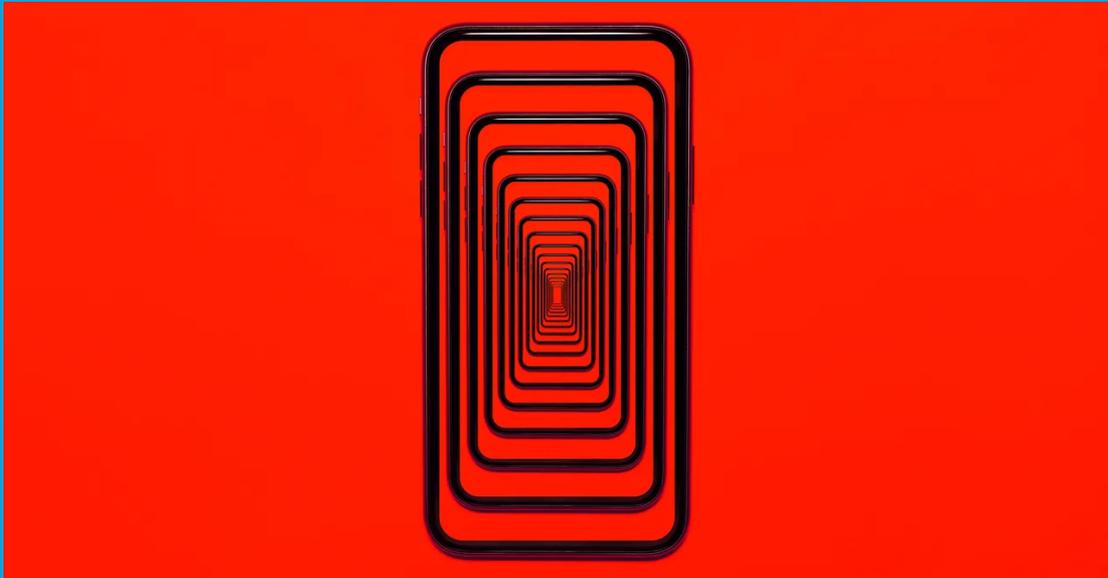


Security Newsletter

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Why the Twilio Breach Cuts So Deep



The communication company Twilio suffered a breach at the beginning of August that it says impacted 163 of its customer organizations. Out of Twilio's 270,000 clients, 0.06 percent might seem trivial, but the company's particular role in the digital ecosystem means that that fractional slice of victims had an outsized value and influence. The secure messaging app Signal, two-factor authentication app Authy, and authentication firm Okta are all Twilio customers that were secondary victims of the breach.

Twilio provides application programming interfaces through which companies can automate call and texting services. This could mean a system a barber uses to remind customers about haircuts and have them text back "Confirm" or "Cancel." But it can also be the platform through which organizations manage their two-factor authentication text messaging systems for sending one-time authentication codes. Though it's long been known that SMS is an insecure way to receive these codes, it's definitely better than nothing, and organizations haven't been able to move away from the practice completely. Even a company like Authy, whose core product is an authentication code-generating app, uses some of Twilio's services.

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