

## Privacy Commissioner monitoring Yahoo hack

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The Privacy Commissioner is monitoring the Yahoo hack that compromised up to 500 million users' accounts.

The hack affects a small portion of the 825,000 email accounts that Spark provides to users through its partnership with Yahoo.

The hack exemplifies the international nature of privacy, with the US Federal Trade Commission and Irish Data Protection Commissioner already working together to make enquiries into the incident.

The Yahoo hack included names, email addresses and security questions and answers used to reset passwords. Most Spark customers have probably not had their security questions and answers compromised.

It is not yet clear when Yahoo learned about the hack, which took place in 2014.

Mr Edwards said "When agencies lose customer data, they need to help those customers take steps to protect themselves by alerting them as quickly as possible.

"This is particularly true with a breach of this size and with such sensitive information. Email accounts are often a central repository of peoples' online identities, so a compromised email account can lead to other information being compromised, such as banking and medical information."

The proposed reforms to the Privacy Act include mandatory breach notification, where agencies must report breaches of a certain scale. These reforms are due to be tabled in Parliament in 2017.

Mr Edwards said "We are grateful that Spark quickly alerted us about this breach and immediately began taking action to resolve it. However, the fact that Yahoo may have known about the breach for a number of months before alerting the public shows why we need mandatory breach notification. Every day counts in a data breach and agencies need greater incentive to take a leaf out of Spark's book by promptly telling customers that their personal information has been compromised."

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For further information, contact Sam Grover 021 959 050

Note:

Yahoo has published guidance to help users protect themselves. This guidance is available here: <https://help.yahoo.com/kb/account/SLN27925.html?impressions=true>