



# Anatomy of an Email Hack

HOW AND WHY YOU NEED TO PROTECT YOURSELF FROM THE YAHOO HACK

# What was stolen from 500 million accounts

- ▶ It's unclear whether the theft was in 2012 or 2014 – or worse, a continuous theft for 2 years. Unfortunately, Yahoo didn't find out about it until recently.
  - ▶ 1. Email address
  - ▶ 2. Email password (easily decrypted)
  - ▶ 3. Security Questions & Answers (mother's maiden name, etc.)
  - ▶ 4. Birthdates
  - ▶ 5. Other email addresses

# Can't I just change my password???

- ▶ Certainly, you need to change your password if you have a Yahoo account. Even if you haven't used it in years, it is best to get in and change the password.
- ▶ But that's the tip of the iceberg.
  - ▶ 1. Have you used that email address or any others that were stolen as the login anywhere?
  - ▶ 2. If you have used the email address as a login, did you use the same password or a simple variant of it? There is software that will try all the variants. If your password was "password" they will try "p@ssword," "pa\$\$word" and all the other popular variants. If you used simple variants, you are in serious danger.

# What do I need to do?

- ▶ At the bare minimum, you need to:
  - ▶ 1. Change everything at Yahoo, other than the actual email address itself. This includes the security questions.
  - ▶ 2. Change everything on every other account where you have used your Yahoo address as the login. Again, change the security questions. Change the birthdate to a wrong one if you can (you probably can't at banks).
  - ▶ 3. Take the opportunity to rethink your password policy. Get a password manager or very carefully write down all your wildly different, new passwords.
  - ▶ 4. Switch to 2-Factor authentication wherever you can.

# What is 2-Factor authentication?

- ▶ 2-Factor authentication is a method of letting you control access any time a new computer (or computer-like device) attempts to access your account.
- ▶ You make your smart phone number the controller for all your account logins. Any time someone attempts to login, you get a text with a 5-7 digit reference number. If the person attempting to login cannot provide the number, they cannot get in, even if they know your username, password and the answer to all your security questions.
- ▶ Every time you login with a new computer, or even a new browser on an old computer, you will have to enter the reference number to login.

# I really need to do all that???

- ▶ Depends. If no hacker can figure out how to get around 2-Factor authentication and you never lose your phone, you **should** be OK.
- ▶ But with all the hacks going on, I simply cannot imagine anyone relying on just one security methodology. 2-Factor is the best we have right now, but please, don't think that it is perfect. Do it right.
- ▶ The good news is that a lot of new security technology is in the works. Hard to know which one(s) will be the winners right now.
- ▶ We all need to keep our security up-to-date. It's not a one solution will work for life.