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4. Zomato data theft reveals dark side of cyberspace

Zomato data theft reveals dark side of cyberspace

Anand J | TNN | Updated: May 19, 2017, 09:47 IST



BENGALURU: The [Zomato](#) data theft incident has exposed the dark side of cyberspace running the risk of personal data heists in the event of a security breach. The personal data of consumers is at the mercy of internet companies, and Indian data protection laws are inadequate to protect private information from hackers getting their hands on it. With India's push towards a cashless economy, securing personal details has posed more challenges to the custodians of that data.

5 tips to protect yourself from becoming a ransomware victim

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Take safe and secure backups

Regularly update and patch your systems

Use anti-virus software

Educate your employees

If hit by ransomware attack, shutdown network immediately

"Indian companies rarely take data security seriously and hence, such breaches are not uncommon," said Zainab Bawa, founder of HasGeek, a platform for developers. She said that the customer has no way of staying informed that his or her data is secure with a payment company or a consumer internet firm.

The importance that a company attaches to security depends on their own ethos. Viral Shah, co-founder of Julia Computing and a cocreator of the Julia programming language, said companies need to decide the level of cyber risks assessing their threat landscapes. Shah said data protection is a three-step process that requires companies to safeguard their hardware with sufficient security protocols, monitor data access and make sure it's encrypted, as in the case of Aadhaar. "The companies have to work on their own software and applications to add layers of security," he said.

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Bawa feels that hackers are usually one step ahead of the pack and security cannot be treated as one-time expenditure. "You have to treat a security breach as a business risk and monitor it in-house rather than outsource it to third parties," she said.



[Zomato hacked, data of 17 million users stolen: Report](#)

India's largest-restaurant guide Zomato appears to have suffered a major security breach. According to a report in security blog HackRead, "a vendor going by the online handle of 'nclay' is claiming to have hacked Zomato and selling the data of its 17 million registered users on a popular Dark Web marketplace."

While consumers have rights under the IT law to take on internet companies, the lack of good compensation and the harrowing experience of going through the judicial process acts as a deterrent, said Pavan Duggal, cyber law expert and an advocate in the Supreme Court. He said that if companies are breaching security as mentioned under ISO 27001 (international information security standard), consumers have a right to sue the firm and get compensation. "There is a lack of awareness among consumers about their rights and the perception of no-remedy is a challenge," said Duggal.

Even as cyber risk becomes a hot-button issue, some large firms are making it a boardroom agenda. Conversations are not just happening in the tech function, but it's going right up to independent directors. "For organizations, it's important to recognise their crown jewels. I think that transition hasn't emerged. Of course, there is a shift happening -- changing the IT systems architecture to be more prepared. The key focus for such organizations is, how do you look at [cybersecurity](#) as a business risk and start measuring it," said Atul Gupta, head of cybersecurity in KPMG India.

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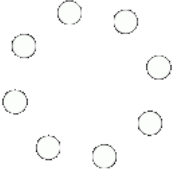
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