

# Comms: T-Mobile and stolen customer data

Recently, one of our staff began to get spam purporting to be from T-Mobile. Is he among the "millions" of people whose data has been stolen from T-Mobile? He does seem to be unlucky that way..

The chap who is being spammed by a company called fagms.net that sends out its junk with T-Mobile in the sender field, has written to T-Mobile telling them of the spam. Their response was to ask him for his mobile number. In the UK he has a T-Mobile phone, the contract for which will expire next month.

He seems to be victimised by data leaks.

Completing a form for a Malaysian government department, he put a single-use e-mail address in the form. It was used on that form only, and only once. He gets spammed at that address.

He bought a car: two days later, he started receiving telephone calls from people asking if he had a car to sell.

When we moved all of our Malaysian mobile phones from on company to another, keeping our numbers, they were all grouped together into a single account which, for various reasons, are registered to a local director. He started to get spam SMS and unsolicited sales calls within days of the transfer. The interesting thing is that, when it's a phone call, the callers know the name of the account holder and ask for that person, never for the actual user.

T-Mobile identified the problem and reported it to the Information Commissioner's Office, the trendy name recently given to the Office of Data Protection. The ICO, T-Mobile said, asked T-Mobile not to make public the breaches which contain name, address, contact information and the date of contract expiry, it is said.

But then the ICO made a statement about the case and, to avoid speculation, T-Mobile decided to release the story.

It appears that a single employee stole millions of records of customers, and sold them onto brokers who then resold them to rival telephone companies and / or dealers who are paid substantial commissions for each new account signed up.

As for the chap in KL, he's distinctly unimpressed with the whole idea of data security.

"Hell," he says. "Even a bank has farmed out its advertising to an SMS spam company and I'm getting stuff from them, too. So any chance of security for my contact info has gone. I seem to be target zero for all of this stuff."