Marriott International (Starwood)
Date: September 2018
Impact: 500 million customers

Hotel Marriot International announced the exposure of sensitive details belonging to half a million Starwood guests following an attack on its systems in September 2018. In a statement published in November the same year, the hotel giant said: "On September 8, 2018, Marriott received an alert from an internal security tool regarding an attempt to access the Starwood guest reservation database. Marriott quickly engaged leading security experts to help determine what occurred." Marriott learned during the investigation that there had been unauthorized access to the Starwood network since 2014. "Marriott recently discovered that an unauthorized party had copied and encrypted information and took steps towards removing it. On November 19, 2018, Marriott was able to decrypt the information and determined that the contents were from the Starwood guest reservation database," the statement added.

The data copied included guests' names, mailing addresses, phone numbers, email addresses, passport numbers, Starwood Preferred Guest account information, dates of birth, gender, arrival and departure information, reservation dates, and communication preferences. For some, the information also included payment card numbers and expiration dates, though these were apparently encrypted.

Marriot carried out an investigation assisted by security experts following the breach and announced plans to phase out Starwood systems and accelerate security enhancements to its network. The company was eventually fined £18.4 million (reduced from £99 million) by UK data governing body the Information Commissioner's Office (ICO) in 2020 for failing to keep customers' personal data secure. An article by New York Times attributed the attack to a Chinese intelligence group seeking to gather data on US citizens.