

A Sprint contractor left thousands of US cell phone bills on the internet by mistake

Zack Whittaker

@zackwhittaker / 10:29 pm UTC • December 4, 2019



Image Credits: Getty Images

A contractor working for cell giant Sprint stored on an unprotected cloud server hundreds of thousands of cell phone bills of AT&T, Verizon and T-Mobile subscribers.

The storage bucket had more than 261,300 documents, the vast majority of which were phone bills belonging to cell subscribers dating as far back as 2015. But the



It's not known how long the bucket was exposed.

The bills — which contained names, addresses and phone numbers, and many included call histories — were collected as part of an offer to allow cell subscribers to switch to Sprint, according to Sprint-branded documents found on the server. The documents explained how the cell giant would pay for the subscriber's early termination fee to break their current cell service contract, a common sales tactic used by cell providers.

In some cases we found other sensitive documents, such as a bank statement, and a screenshot of a web page that had subscribers' online usernames, passwords and account PINs — which in combination could allow access to a customer's account.

U.K.-based penetration testing company [Fidus Information Security](#) found the exposed data, but it wasn't immediately clear who owned the bucket. Fidus disclosed the security lapse to Amazon, which informed the customer of the exposure — without naming them. The bucket was subsequently shut down.

verizon

Invoice Number [REDACTED] Account Number [REDACTED] Date Due 05/29/16 Page 5 of 46

Summary for [REDACTED]: 646-[REDACTED]

Your Plan
MORE EVERY UNL TLK&TXT 30GB
(see pg 3)

Have more questions about your charges?
Get details for usage charges at www.vzw.com/mybusinessaccount.

Monthly Charges
Smartphone Line Access Refund \$40.00 per month / 4 days refunded
\$40.00

Usage and Purchase Charges

Voice	Allowance	Used	Billable	Cost
Shared	minutes	unlimited	61	---
Mobile to Mobile	minutes	unlimited	184	---
Night/Weekend	minutes	unlimited	63	---
Total Voice				\$0.00
Messaging				
Text, Picture & Video	messages	unlimited	633	---
Total Messaging				\$0.00
Data				
Unbilled Usage from Previous Months				
(Data usage is applied against any remaining allowance for the month in which the usage occurred.)				
Gigabyte Usage	gigabytes	.001	.001	***
Current Data Usage				
Gigabyte Usage	gigabytes	30.000	4.258	---
Total Data				\$0.00
Total Usage and Purchase Charges				\$0.00
***Charges for usage that exceeded the shared allowance can be found in the "Account Charges and Credits" section under "Account Usage Charges."				
Fed Universal Service Charge	5.99			
Local BUS Lic Surchg	.52			
Other Charges and Credits				
Early Termination Fee	135.00			
Taxes, Governmental Surcharges and Fees+	\$141.51			
VA Communication Sales Tax	6.91			
Total Current Charges for 646-[REDACTED]	\$143.09			

att.com

Page: 1 of 6
Bill Cycle Date: 04/23/16 - 05/22/16
Account: [REDACTED]

SUWANEE, [REDACTED]

Visit us online at: www.att.com

Wireless Statement

Bill-At-A-Glance

Previous Balance	\$440.02
Payment - 05/11	\$395.00CR
Adjustments	\$0.00
Past Due - Please Pay Immediately	\$45.02
New Charges	\$1,319.62
Total Amount Due	\$1,364.64

New Charges Due in Full by Jun 17, 2016

Get the new **Samsung Galaxy S7** for \$0 down on AT&T Next!
Add a smartphone today! Visit att.com/addtoday or call 877.981.7155

Service Summary

Service	Page	Total
Account Charges	1	\$5.00
Wireless		\$1,314.62
[REDACTED]	2	
[REDACTED]	2	
[REDACTED]	3	
[REDACTED]	3	
[REDACTED]	3	
[REDACTED]	4	
[REDACTED]	4	
[REDACTED]	4	
Total New Charges		\$1,319.62

Manage Your Account:
Online: att.com/myatt
Mobile App: att.com/myattapp
Support: 800 331-0500 or 611 from your mobile device
TTY: 866 241-6567

For important information about your bill, please see the **News You Can Use** section (Page 4).

Return bottom portion with your check in the enclosed envelope.
Payments may take 7 days to post.

Data Used (MB)
[REDACTED] 7,993
[REDACTED] 0
[REDACTED] 2,169
[REDACTED] 11,491

Wireless Services provided by AT&T Mobility, LLC.
Printed on Recyclable Paper

A Verizon and AT&T phone bill from two customers. (Image: supplied)



T-Mobile

Balance forward	\$0.00
Current charges	\$108.92
Total amount due by 04/13/15	\$108.92

Save valuable time each month by enrolling in EasyPay automatic payment. Set it up easy through your My T-Mobile account. Sign up at t-mobile.com/easypay.

MARIETTA GA [REDACTED]

Current charges

Line [REDACTED]	Amount \$108.92	Change from last month \$21.11 ↓
Total	\$108.92	

Bill highlights

- ① The regulatory programs fee increased; (2) your taxes may have decreased. See page 2 of your bill for more info.
- ② "Change from last month" does not include changes to taxes and fees unless associated with changes in service plan or Equipment.
- ③ Stop running to the mailbox and start reducing your paper clutter. Go digital by enrolling in paperless billing at t-mobile.com.
- ④ Visit my.t-mobile.com to pay your bill online, manage your account, get product support, and shop for the latest devices and accessories.

Questions? For more information visit my.t-mobile.com.

Please detach this portion and return with your payment. Please make sure address shows through window.

T-Mobile Statement for [REDACTED]
Account number: [REDACTED]

Pay online: t-mobile.com/pay
Pay by phone: *PAY (*729)

Total amount due by 04/13/15 \$108.92
Amount enclosed [REDACTED]

Scan to pay [REDACTED]

Sign up for EasyPay - Check box and complete reverse side.
 If you changed your address - Check box and record new address on the reverse side.

PO BOX 8077 London, KY 40742

Sprint [REDACTED]
Scan to pay [REDACTED]

Amount Due by Jun 17 \$221.98
Amount Enclosed \$ [REDACTED]

Last three months (new charges)
\$222.05 [REDACTED] \$223.55 [REDACTED] \$221.98 [REDACTED]
Mar Apr This month

PO Box 54977 Los Angeles, CA 90054-0977

BRIGHTON, CO [REDACTED]

Postage PAID Sprint

A T-Mobile bill found on the exposed servers. A handful of Sprint bills were also found. (Image: supplied)

After a brief review of the cache, we found one document that said, simply, “TEST.” When we ran the file through a metadata checker, it revealed the name of the person who created the document — an account executive at Deardorff Communications, the marketing agency tasked with the Sprint promotion.

When reached, Jeff Deardorff, president of Deardorff Communications, confirmed his company owned the bucket and that access was restricted earlier on Wednesday.

“I have launched an internal investigation to determine the root cause of this issue, and we are also reviewing our policies and procedures to make sure something like this doesn’t happen again,” he told TechCrunch in an email.

Given the exposed information involved customers of the big four cell giants, we contacted each company. AT&T did not comment, and T-Mobile did not respond to a request for comment. Verizon spokesperson Richard Young said the company was “currently reviewing” the matter and would have details “as soon as it’s available.” (*TechCrunch* is owned by Verizon.)

Sprint spokesperson Lisa Belot would not disclose the nature of its relationship with Deardorff but said it was “assured that the error has been corrected.”

“The uptrend we’re seeing in sensitive data being publicly accessible is concerning, despite Amazon releasing tools to help combat this,” said Harriet Lester, director of research and development at Fidus. “This scenario was slightly different to usual as it was tricky to identify the owner of the bucket, but thankfully the security team at AWS were able to pass the report on to the owner within hours and public access was shut down soon after.”

We asked Deardorff if his company plans to inform those whose information was exposed by the security lapse. We did not immediately receive a response.

Updated with Sprint comment.

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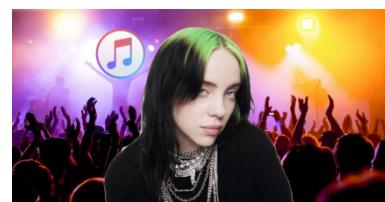
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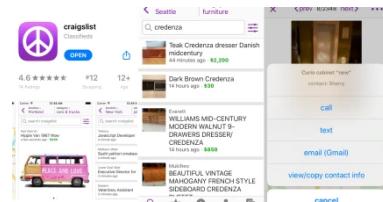
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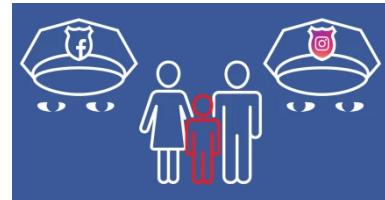
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