

Unauthorised Mobile Phone Porting Events

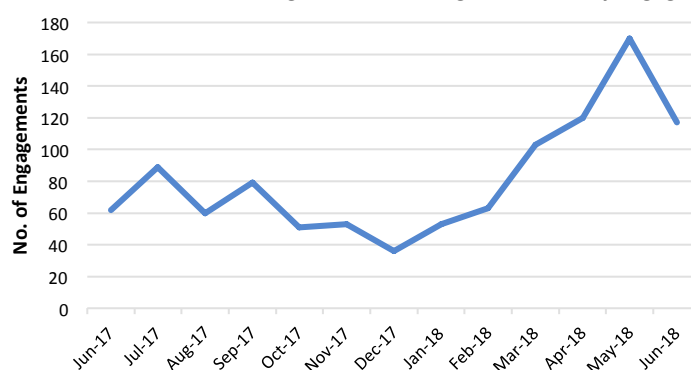
Overview

IDCARE Insights is a bulletin for the community aimed at raising awareness of key issues and trends relating to identity and cyber security. Our insights come direct from community engagement via our crisis support line. They capture the journey and experiences of community members on how their personal information was compromised, what ways it was misused, and the challenges confronted in responding to these risks. This bulletin focuses on unauthorised mobile phone porting – where a criminal steals the identity of a mobile phone account holder and transfers their mobile number to a new service (handset) for the purposes of intercepting text messaging. The trends and issues presented in this bulletin cover the community contacts to IDCARE between July 2017 to June 2018. During this period, IDCARE's community crisis support services responded to **1,056** engagements involving the unauthorised porting of a mobile phone service. The trends reveal a steady increase over the last financial year (FY 17-18), with the last quarter revealing a considerable spike of events.

Impacted Community Demographics

62% of individuals impacted were aged between 25- 45 years old. **32%** were aged between 45-64 years old. **75%** of individuals reported that they resided in **metropolitan areas**. The majority of community members resided in New South Wales (**59%**). A further **21%** resided in Victoria.

Unauthorised Mobile Porting Events Resulting in Community Engagement



Nature and Extent of Compromise

Around **49%** of community members impacted by unauthorised mobile phone porting **could not identify** how their credentials had been compromised. Amongst those who could, **14%** had experienced **mail theft**, **7%** had responded to a **telephone scam**, and **6%** had responded to a **phishing email**. Members of the community took on average **10.2 days** from their initial compromised to first detect the theft of their personal information and credentials. The most common personal information attributes and credential types that were known to be compromised in cases where a community member experienced an unauthorised mobile phone porting event were **mobile phone numbers** (66%), **bank account details** (49%), **driver's licences** (44%), **first name and surname** (40%), **date of birth** (39%), and **email address** (39%). Interestingly not all of the information identified as being commonly compromised is needed to enable an unauthorised port.

Criminal Misuse and the Impacts on the Community

Community members who have experienced an unauthorised mobile phone number port experienced **2.9 total misuse events** prior to engaging with IDCARE. Excluding the porting event, the top five most common misuse event experienced by clients were criminal enabled bank account access (**41%**), misuse of an existing credit card (**18%**), opening a new mobile phone account in the client's name (**16%**), criminal modification of passwords to the client's online accounts (**15%**), and victim enabled bank account access (**8%**). Misuse occurred on average **within 2 weeks** of the initial compromise.

Approximately **one in three** victims experienced a financial loss during their event. The total misuse value for this period was **\$1,523,266** with an average loss of **\$11,368**. Community members revealed that approximately **\$555,702** was recovered of the initial financial loss.

Beyond financial loss community members experienced considerable lost time and frustration in managing the response to their identity misuse events, including negative emotional, psychological, and lifestyle impacts. On average individuals spent **32 non-consecutive hours** attempting to address their identity theft experience. Approximately **53%** of individuals had to **close their affected banking and telecommunications accounts**. Around a third (**32%**) had to **take time off work**, thus exacerbating their initial financial impact. **One in ten** individuals **stopped using devices** capable of Internet access all together. **More than two thirds** of clients reported psychological impacts that included feelings of anxiety, paranoia, anger, violation and deception. The community impacts and national security implications of unauthorised mobile phone porting presents an opportunity for stakeholders to re-think. IDCARE stands ready to inform and contribute to the debate.

Disclaimer

© 2018 Copyright Identity Care Australia & New Zealand Ltd. While every effort has been made to ensure the accuracy of the information in this bulletin, IDCARE disclaims any liability to any person in respect to any actions performed or not performed as a result of the contents or any accompanying data provided.