

Personal information of 460,000 Volkswagen electric car owners leaked

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A software development subsidiary of the world's leading automaker Volkswagen, Cariad, is facing a major data breach that could expose hundreds of thousands of electric car owners, according to a report from German publication Spiegel NetzWelt. The breach could leave Volkswagen electric car owners' personal information stored online for months, including their travel and contact data.

According to preliminary investigation results, the precise location data of 460,000 vehicles manufactured by VW, Seat and Audi was leaked. This information was accessible via Amazon's cloud storage platform. The white hat hacker association Chaos Computer Club (CCC) discovered the leak on November 26 and reported it to the company. The good news is that Cariad representatives confirmed that no bad actors have accessed the exposed data, nor have any cases of unauthorized misuse of the data been reported.

Parent company VW acknowledged the error and said the issue has been fixed, so the leaked information is no longer accessible. The company also noted that the leak only involved location and contact information, as passwords and payment data were not affected.



In fact, the CCC hacker group was only able to access anonymized vehicle data without drawing any conclusions regarding specific customers. This was done 'by bypassing a number of security mechanisms, which required a high level of expertise and a significant investment of time.'

In other words, affected customers shouldn't be too concerned about their location data being collected by bad actors on the dark web. Volkswagen has begun an in-depth investigation into the matter and will make a decision on next steps once the investigation is complete.

As modern vehicles become more 'online', so too do their owners' exposure to new risks. Just last year, a viral TikTok challenge teaching Hyundai owners how to hack their cars led to more than a dozen crashes and eight deaths.

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