Mystery Science and Mystery Doug Security Update - FAQ

December 2019

What Happened?

We recently learned that a file containing some of our user data (including user names, email addresses, and encrypted passwords) was obtained by an unauthorized person. The data did ***not*** include any financial information (any credit card information used to pay for Mystery Science memberships is processed via an outside service such as Paypal or Stripe); we do ***not*** collect other sensitive information such as Social Security numbers or date of birth; as a product used solely by teachers or parents, we also do ***not*** collect student data (beyond the ages of homeschooled children for some homeschoolers and the grade teachers teach). The security of user data is very important to us. We immediately launched an investigation and engaged a security expert to assist in our investigation, containment, and remediation efforts. We have also notified law enforcement authorities.

Out of an abundance of caution, we have notified all Mystery Science and Mystery Doug users who may have been affected by this incident.

How did this happen?

A security incident occurred at one of our third-party providers. We continue to investigate the incident both with our internal team and with a security expert we engaged to work with us. Protecting our customers' data is our priority, and we have already taken actions to help further safeguard this data.

What information could have been impacted by this incident?

The following types of information could have been impacted by this incident:

- Certain internal account information in our system as of September 2018 (e.g., user names, email addresses, a small number of phone numbers, ages of children for some homeschool users and grades teachers teach, user ID, one-way encrypted passwords salted uniquely per user, IP address, and city and zip code entered in our database or inferred from IP address)
- Certain internal identifiers and fields that have no discernible meaning to anyone outside of Mystery Science (e.g., user settings such as whether certain product features are turned on or off)

Importantly, this incident does ***not*** involve Social Security numbers or payment card, bank account, or other financial information. It also does ***not*** involve student information (beyond ages of homeschool children and grades a teacher teaches), as neither Mystery Science nor Mystery Doug allows for student accounts.

What are you doing to ensure the security of my data?

We value your privacy and deeply regret that this incident occurred. Immediately upon discovering this incident, our internal security team began a full security review and, in addition to encouraging users to change passwords, we are working with law enforcement agencies and external security consultants to strengthen our system's security.

If my data was impacted, what are my risks? Could my identity be stolen?

This incident does ***not*** affect sensitive personal information like Social Security numbers or payment card, bank account, or other financial information, so it is highly unlikely that your identity could be stolen as a result.

Is any student information impacted by this incident?

No: no student information is affected (beyond the ages of homeschooled children for some homeschool accounts). Mystery Science and Mystery Doug are both products used by teachers or homeschool parents; we neither require nor allow students to set up accounts. We have an explicit step in our account setup process that asks users to verify their role, and if a potential user indicates that they are a student, we do not allow them to set up an account. If students do manage to set up accounts by pretending to be an adult, and we discover that they are students, we immediately disable their accounts. We do not maintain any student educational records in our system, and we do not knowingly have any student accounts.

Is it safe to continue using my Mystery Science or Mystery Doug account?

Yes. Out of an abundance of caution, we have notified all Mystery Science and Mystery Doug users who might have been affected and have requested that they change their passwords. As an additional layer of security, we are logging out admin-level users with access to school or district dashboard information (e.g., school principals and district admins).

How do I change my password?

We have emailed everyone who may have been affected a link they can click to reset their password. Alternatively, next time you visit the Mystery Science or Mystery Doug website, you will be prompted to change your password. If you're logged out of the site, just click on the "don't know your password" gray link under the login window; you'll receive a password reset link via email. It's always good to change passwords regularly, and use passwords that have at least 8 characters, including letters, numbers, and symbols.

Should I also reset passwords for my other accounts?

We recommend changing your password on any other sites or accounts where you used the same login information that you used for Mystery Science and Mystery Doug. It is generally best practice to use a unique password for each service. However, we do not believe anyone got access to your password because we store your password in a one-way encrypted form that is salted uniquely per user.

I have more questions about my account. Who can I talk to?

If you have any questions, please contact us at support@mysteryscience.com, or submit your question via the Ask Anything button when you're logged into your Mystery Science account.