



Account Hacked or Taken Over

Overview

When an email, social-media, cloud or other online account is taken over, preserve the evidence before recovery actions remove useful traces.

Act quickly

If the compromised account controls banking, business systems or password resets for other services, prioritise those linked risks immediately.

What to do now

01 Use a trusted device

Recover the account from a device you believe is not compromised.

02 Secure the account

Change the password, enable MFA and revoke unknown sessions or devices.

03 Check account changes

Review recovery email, phone number, forwarding rules, connected apps and security settings.

04 Preserve alerts

Save login warnings, password-reset emails and security notifications.

05 Review recent activity

Note messages sent, files accessed, posts made or settings changed without permission.

06 Secure linked accounts

Change reused passwords and protect accounts that rely on the compromised mailbox for recovery.



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INCIDENT HELP SHEET

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What not to do

- ! Do not delete security alerts or suspicious messages until they are preserved.
- ! Do not reuse an old password or a password used on another service.
- ! Do not trust recovery links received in unsolicited messages.
- ! Do not assume the problem is solved until active sessions, connected apps and recovery settings are reviewed.

Evidence to preserve

- ✓ Security alert emails and notifications
- ✓ Login-history screenshots or exports
- ✓ Unknown devices and active sessions
- ✓ Changes to recovery details
- ✓ Suspicious messages, posts or sent emails
- ✓ Connected third-party applications
- ✓ Times when access was lost or restored

Before speaking to a forensic specialist

Keep the original device or account available, avoid unnecessary changes, write down the sequence of events while it is fresh, and explain any containment or recovery actions already taken. The more complete the context, the easier it is to assess what evidence may still be available.

Need help now?

Digital Forensics can assist with evidence preservation, forensic examination and clear reporting.

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