



WHITE PLAINS
PUBLIC LIBRARY

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March 26, 2019

Terry Kirchner, Executive Director
Westchester Library System
570 Taxter Road, Suite 400
Elmsford, NY 10523

Dear Terry:

As you know, in the past several months the Westchester Library System (WLS) was infected with a vicious malware/virus attack, and the repercussions at many libraries lasted for weeks. Fortunately, White Plains was not infected, and we have welcomed computer users from throughout the county, especially our Greenburgh neighbors.

Patrons continue to ask us about the attack: What happened? What did the malware do? Was my personal information compromised? Unfortunately, we don't have answers to these questions.

New York State's Information Security Breach and Notification Act provides clear directives that an organization should follow after a breach in which private information was compromised, or when the data "is reasonably believed to have been acquired by a person without valid authorization."

Directives include notifying the offices of the New York Attorney General; the NYS Division of State Police; the Department of State's Division of Consumer Protection as well as informing the public through multiple channels. More information can be found at <https://its.ny.gov/breach-notification>, which includes a link to Article 39-F, Notification of Unauthorized Acquisition of Private Information.

At the Public Library Directors Association meeting last Thursday, March 21, I inquired if WLS had plans to either inform the appropriate state agencies or, more importantly, the public about the malware attack. I was told no.

According to research conducted by the Pew Research Center, public libraries are one of the most trusted institutions in the country. In part, we have earned that trust by acting as good stewards of personal information and valuing privacy. Our patrons understand that viruses are a part of using technology; what they are less likely to understand is suppressing the information about a malware/virus attack.

I encourage the Westchester Library System to communicate—without delay—with government agencies and, especially, our public about this event. I would hope a press release would be issued and shared with local media as well as through the websites of WLS and all member libraries.

Sincerely,

Brian Kenney, Ph.D.
Library Director

cc: WLS Board of Trustees