World's worst data-loss incidents

Millions of British families have been warned to look out for identity theft after the government admitted it had lost bank details of 25 million people. The loss is the world's fifth largest reported data loss incident and the third largest ever by a government body

92 million

2004: 92 million e-mail records stolen from *America Online*

50 million

2007: Loss of 50 million Japanese pension files – because of sloppy book-keeping at social security agency – contributes to resignation of Prime Minister *Shinzo Abe*

40 million

2005: Data of 40m *MasterCard, American Express, Discover*, and *Visa* customers stolen from *CardSystems Solutions*, a third-party card processor

26.5 million

2006: United States government loses information relating to 26.5m ex-service personnel

25 million

2007: British government loses records of 25m people – almost half the population. Data includes names, addresses, dates of birth, bank account and national insurance numbers

Picture: Getty Images

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