

Sony, Epsilon execs to testify

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(AP) -- Executives from Sony and online marketing firm Epsilon will go before lawmakers on Thursday to try to explain recent data breaches at their companies that have exposed email addresses, credit card numbers and other personal information belonging to millions of consumers.

Tim Schaaff, president of Sony Network Entertainment International, and Jeanette Fitzgerald, general counsel of Epsilon Data Management LLC, are scheduled to testify at a hearing of the House Commerce Subcommittee on Commerce, Manufacturing and Trade Thursday.

The hearing follows high-profile breaches at both companies in recent months.

[Sony Corp.](#) was forced to shut down its popular PlayStation Network for weeks in April and May after a massive [hacker attack](#) targeting credit card information and other personal data compromised more than 100 million user accounts. The company has faced criticism that it waited too long to inform consumers of the breach. Although Sony began investigating unusual activity on the PlayStation network on April 19, it did not notify consumers until April 26.

Sony's problems came on the heels of a huge [security breach](#) at Epsilon, a unit of Alliance Data Systems Corp. that handles online marketing campaigns for major banks, hotels and stores. The hack resulted in the theft of millions of email addresses from customers of companies including Citigroup Inc., JPMorgan Chase & Co., Best Buy Co. Inc., the Kroger Co. grocery chain, Walgreen Co.'s drugstores and the Hilton and

Marriott hotel chains.

Although email addresses by themselves are of little use to criminals, they can be used in so-called "phishing" attacks. Such attacks trick consumers into revealing passwords, Social Security numbers and other sensitive data by sending them emails that appear to come from companies that they already patronize.

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