

Google announces another new awful security flaw, closes social network early

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 Image: Google's offices in New York on March 5, 2018.

Google's offices in New York on March 5, 2018. Spencer Platt / Getty Images file

/ Source: CNBC.com

By Jillian D'Onfro, CNBC

[Google](#) is shutting down its beleaguered social network sooner than expected in the wake of a new security issue that affected 52.5 million users.

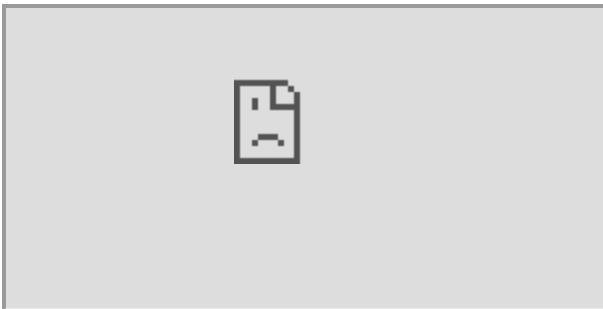
Google Plus received [its initial kiss of death](#) in early October, when the company revealed that a security bug had exposed the account information of 500,000 users, including their names, email addresses and occupations. At the time, Google planned to shut down the social network by August 2019.

But [in a blog post Monday](#) Google wrote that it discovered a second bug that allowed the profile information of 52.5 million users to be viewable by developers, even if it was set to private, using one of Google's application programming interfaces, or

APIs, for six days in November. Once again, the available data included information like users' names, email addresses, occupations and ages.

Google said that the bug did not give third-party apps access to users' financial data or passwords and that it didn't find any evidence that the private profile information was accessed or misused. However, it now plans to shut down Google Plus by April 2019, and access to its APIs in the next 90 days.

Google's initial security bug raised hackles in Washington and with the general public because [The Wall Street Journal reported at the time that Google](#) didn't disclose it for months because it feared regulatory scrutiny and reputational damage.



Monday's disclosure comes a day before Google CEO [Sundar Pichai is set to testify before Congress](#) about transparency and accountability.

"We understand that our ability to build reliable products that protect your data drives user trust," Google's blog post said.

"We have always taken this seriously, and we continue to invest in our privacy programs to refine internal privacy review processes, create powerful data controls, and engage with users,

researchers, and policymakers to get their feedback and improve our programs.”

Jillian D’Onfro, CNBC

Jillian D’Onfro is a technology reporter for CNBC.com in San Francisco where she focuses on Alphabet and Silicon Valley culture.