

# 'Crashgate' reveals unprotected donor database on Coleman's site

By [Paul Schmelzer](#)

Wednesday, January 28, 2009 at 10:29 pm

Norm Coleman's staffers have still not responded to my queries about their [disputed claim that the former senator's Web site crashed due to a traffic spike](#), but one thing's for certain: While the site is up and running again, it appears to be severely under-secured.

One IT professional tells me that the campaign has stored a database of campaign donors (complete with names, email addresses, phone numbers and donation amounts) in a publicly accessible, unprotected directory, and [MN Publius commenter](#) Adria Richards posts a [screen grab of the 205 mb database available for download](#) from Coleman's site. (The FEC makes donor information available to the public, but not with this level of detail.)

It's hard to say whether the scrutiny brought on by today's questioning about a possibly faked site crash (dubbed "[Crashgate](#)" by some on Twitter) somehow exposed the data or whether Team Coleman has stored the database in such a fashion throughout the entire campaign. I'm also told that the database included the usernames of registered site users, along with their unencrypted passwords, a potentially serious security concern for users who, like many of us, have a master password for various online accounts.

"It's security by obscurity," a web developer told me on condition of anonymity. "Hoping nobody finds where the data is."

**Update:** Adria Richards, a technology consultant, offers a [comprehensive post about these and other technical issues with Coleman's site security](#).

**Update:** As of 11:40 this evening, the database appears to be password protected.

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