

Security Panel Presentation 1/28/2003

Hoaxes/Frauds & ID Theft Threat

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Computer Crime - Scams, Identity Theft, Harmful Hoaxes

Long before computers and the internet, there were bad people trying to steal your money. The internet makes it easier for criminals from all over the world to find you.

How computer scams attempt to steal your money

Scam artists send you emails you asking you to give them personal information

- * credit card number

- * internet service password

- * bank account info

Protecting yourself from computer scams

Unlike viruses that can hurt you without your knowledge or cooperation, you are a full participant in the computer scam. There is no antivirus-type program to offer a warning for scams. The only protection is the use of common sense and a healthy level of caution and skepticism. When offered a get rich quick scheme that seems too good to be true, the only one likely to get rich will be the scam artist. Remember that your ISP will NEVER ask you for your screenname or password in an email.

Using a credit card on the internet

Your credit card number is more likely to be stolen by a dishonest employee in a restaurant or store than it is when used to purchase items at the website of a reputable companies use systems that scramble your credit card information to prevent theft.

Protecting yourself from credit card theft

Use your credit card online only at websites of reputable companies. Never give your credit card information to anyone who contacts you via email.

Harmful computer hoaxes

Many people believe everything they read on the internet. They receive emails claiming all kinds of "facts" and pass them along to everyone they know. Some of these forwarded messages ask people to delete certain "harmful" files on their computers. These files are not harmful and, in some cases, are necessary to operate your computer. Forwarding messages, especially ones that are untrue, are annoying to the recipients, can make you look foolish or gullible, and can potentially clog up the internet unnecessarily.

Protecting yourself from computer hoaxes

BEFORE forwarding any message along to all your friends, exercise a little skepticism. Check it out first at www.snopes2.com, or one of the many other websites that debunk hoaxes, myths and urban legends. Again common sense should be used.

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