

COVID-19 CYBER & FRAUD PROTECT MESSAGES

Wednesday 29th April 2020

Today's topic is 'Fraud and Scams'.



We all need to be on our guard as history is littered with examples of fraud and scams. The California Gold Rush of the 1850's gave rise to the term Snake Oil Salesman and is often used to describe a scammer or con artist. "Snake oil" was sold as a cure-all elixir for everything from hair loss to TB and Malaria. It was based on the traditional medicine, from the venomous Chinese water snake, used by Chinese gold prospectors,

The modern equivalent of these scammers are selling fake covid19 testing kits, PPE that never arrives or is not fit for purpose.

These scams are preying on victims fear or curiosity about the Covid19 pandemic.

Scams in the digital world include Phishing Emails, SMS messages, Malware distribution, Ransomware, and Credential stealing.

Not only have we seen an increase in all the above using Covid19 as theme but there have been many reports of telephone scams. With scammers impersonating Bank officials and Police officers trying to persuade victims to withdraw money, that is then declared counterfeit and taken away by the fraudsters (Courier Fraud), or asking them to move it to a "safe" account which is controlled by the scammers.



Can you always trust who is on the end of the line? Put down the phone and wait a few minutes before contacting your bank

The latest news and advice from Action Fraud can be found [here](#)

Hot topics

A hoax copy of the NHS website has been discovered. The website includes harmful links to COVID-19-related health tips. Once these links are clicked on, a pop-up box appears asking visitors to save a file called 'COVID19'. If saved, the malware it contains steals passwords, credit card data, cookies from browsers, crypto wallets, files and screenshots.



Regional Organised Crime Unit

Criminals are following a familiar pattern shown during and after disasters – sending out phishing emails and malware with a humanitarian edge, asking for donations from the unsuspecting public to aid those most affected.

Phishing emails, advertising face masks which play on the rumours being reported in the media that the public may be asked to wear face masks outside once the lockdown is lifted.

Reports being received in the US of a new SMS scam claiming ‘someone who came into contact with you has tested positive for COVID-19’.

Attackers have deployed a phishing campaign against remote workers using Skype, luring them with phishing emails that fake notifications from the service. The social engineering in this campaign is refined enough to make victims access the fraudulent login page and provide their credentials. Furthermore, the username is automatically filled in, which only helps clear any suspicion. All the victim has to do is type in their password and the attacker gets it automatically.

Webinars

There will be a series of online Webinars, presented by regional cybercrime units, over the coming weeks and this week’s topic will be: **Online fraud...Evolution or Repetition?**

Thursday 30th April 2020 @ 1400 – 1500 hrs

During this one hour webinar, the City of London Police’s Cyber Griffin team take a closer look at online fraud. The panel of experts will be taking your questions and answering the following:

- Why is online fraud so prevalent?
- Are criminals using new and unique methods, or just repackaging age old techniques?
- How can people and organisations avoid becoming victims?
- What does the future of online fraud look like?

To register for this event please visit the below link- places are limited.

<https://www.eventbrite.co.uk/e/online-fraudevolution-or-repetition-tickets-102893856294>

Reporting

Reporting to Action Fraud can be done [online](#) or by calling 0300 123 2040. To report offers of financial assistance from HMRC, contact phishing@hmrc.gov.uk.

This advice has been collated by the East Midlands Regional Organised Crime Unit (ROCU) and is intended for wider distribution to raise awareness among businesses and the public.

Advice and information is changing daily as we navigate our way through the COVID-19 pandemic, so please ensure you only take information from reputable sources.

If you require any further information, assistance or guidance please contact the ERSOU Protect Team CyberProtect@ERSOU.pnn.police.uk or your local Force protect team.