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for Asante Employees

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ASANTE® News

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Compliance Corner: Be Cyber-Aware, Avoid Tax Scams

Scam artists pose as legitimate entities – including the Internal Revenue Service, other government agencies and financial institutions – in attempts to defraud taxpayers throughout the year, according to the National Cyber Awareness System.



Sophisticated phishing campaigns are employed to lure users to malicious sites or entice them to activate malware in infected email attachments. US-CERT (the U.S. Computer Emergency Readiness Team) and the IRS recommend that taxpayers protect sensitive data, credentials and payment information by preparing for heightened risk this tax season.

Phishing attacks are often disguised as emails from – or websites for – trustworthy organizations, and those who are targeted may be fooled into believing the phishing communication is legitimate.

It's important to be aware of common elements in the phishing lifecycle. They can include:

A Lure: enticing email content

Below is an example of an actual phishing email, disguised to look like a legitimate communication from the host site. Innocent phishing targets often fall victim to these types of emails and inadvertently provide personal information that can be exploited by the scam artists.

Example:

From: Internal Revenue Service [mailto:admin@irs.gov]
Sent: Wednesday, March 01, 2006 12:45 PM
To: john.doe@jdoe.com
Subject: IRS Notification - Please Read This

After the last annual calculations of your fiscal activity we have determined that you are eligible to receive a tax refund of **\$63.80**. Please submit the tax refund request and allow us 6-9 days in order to process it.

A refund can be delayed for a variety of reasons. For example submitting invalid records or applying after the deadline.

To access the form for your tax refund, please [click here](#)

Regards,
Internal Revenue Service

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A Hook: an email-based exploit

- Email with embedded malicious content that is executed when the email is opened

- Email with malicious attachments that are activated upon opening
- Email with “clickable” URLs: the body of the email includes a link, which displays as a recognized, legitimate website, but the actual URL redirects the user to malicious content

A Catch: a transaction conducted following a successful phishing attempt

- Unexplainable charges
- Unexplainable password changes

If you believe you may have revealed sensitive information about Asante or access credentials, report it to network administrators or other appropriate contacts. They can watch for any suspicious or unusual activity. For more information or concerns regarding fake or suspicious emails, contact the IT Help Desk at ext. 14141.

If you believe you may have revealed sensitive account information, immediately change the passwords you may have revealed. If you used the same password for multiple accounts, make sure to change the password for each account and do not use that password in the future.

Submitted by the Compliance Education Committee. Information gathered by the National Cyber Awareness System (2015, January 30).

Asante News is published every Tuesday. Deadline for submission of articles is every Friday. Send via e-mail to asantenews@asante.org.
Question or suggestions: Call Communications and Marketing at (541) 789-3510 or extension 13510.