

I-TEAM

Holiday Hack! Online shopping warning

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The I-Team is warning about a drastic increase in computer infections and phishing scams. (WLS)

By Jason Knowles and Ann Pistone

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CHICAGO (WLS) -- The I-Team is warning about a drastic increase in computer infections and phishing scams.

Your computer, your bank accounts and more are all potential targets this holiday shopping season.

Consumer Investigator Jason Knowles has the information that could save you from a holiday hack.

The threat didn't end on Cyber Monday. Experts predict those hacks will peak in the next few weeks.

There are two different attacks to watch out for: phishing scams and computer infections.

Jason Knowles: "The technology is making the phishing scams look real?"

Ryan Gerding of Enigma Software: "Exactly, the graphics look better the verbiage is better."

The security group [Enigma Software](#) said that in Chicago alone, computer infections from these scams jump 69 percent when the online holiday shopping season kicks off.

"It's usually a couple weeks after Thanksgiving and we think one of the reasons is that's when people are likely to be getting notices in email about purchase they made, they might be more susceptible to clicking on a link then," said Gerding.

The anti-malware group shared its data with the I-Team and said from Black Friday through Christmas, computer infections jumped 99 percent. If your computer is infected by a scammer, they could be mining your device for personal information or you could be the victim of a takeover, in which your computer is held for ransom. One of the biggest threats - pop-ups.

"If you get a pop up, if you get an email about a purchase, instead of clicking on the link in that message or pop-up go to your web browser and log into the website of that retailer. Log into your account," said Gerding.

The Chicago-area Better Business Bureau and tech security group Trustwave, also said they saw a spike of holiday hack reports including phishing emails. They look like real emails from trusted businesses where your account information is stored, the emails try to fool you into giving up your account information on a fake site.

"The tactic they are using is sending you an email making it look like you have been hacked in order for them to try to hack you," said Gerding.

The [Global Cyber Alliance](#) said a recent survey shows only 50 percent of people can tell the difference between a real and fake site after they click on a link.

Global Cyber Alliance also works with the service [Quad9](#), which allows users to search for blocked domains and set up an extra layer of DNS security on their home computers.

It also said some of the most popular retailer's websites get re-created by scammers.

The best way to avoid holiday cyberattacks is to NOT click on links sent to you in email.

If you want to find a bargain or check your account after getting an email, instead of clicking, you should type in the store's website address from your browser.

Legitimate companies will never send you an email asking you to enter your user name and password.

We also reached out to companies whose logos were used in potential scams. They say they educate consumers on how to spot the fakes.

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Some provided links to help consumers protect accounts:

[Click here for Amazon shopping safety tips](#)

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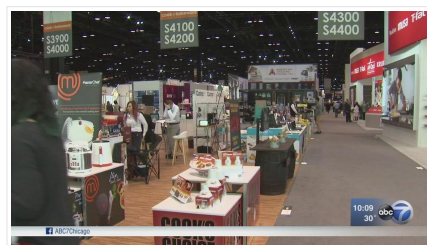
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