

Building a digital defense against airfare scams: by the FBI

This week: building a digital defense against what's called the Business Email Compromise Scam.

We've talked about this kind of scheme before. The traditional scam starts with Company A, Company B and the fraudster who jumps in between the two. The scammer uses an email address almost identical to the one used by a business executive at Company A as he communicates with a vendor or customer at Company B. The scammer is trying to convince Company B to route a payment into the scammer's personal bank account instead of the Company A account. Usually the businesses have a long-standing relationship, and a request to have a big-dollar invoice paid by wire transfer doesn't raise any flags.

In some cases, the bad guy

actually hacks into the email account of the CEO or CFO at a victim company. This allows him to get in to read, receive or send emails at will. As an added twist, he can set rules within the email account to automatically forward to himself any email that includes a particular keyword or is from a particular sender. The emails pass through the legitimate executive's account in a virtual sense – but that executive may never even see them as they get deleted from his inbox immediately.

One of the biggest problems that we in law enforcement face in stopping these crimes is that people don't report when they do realize they are victims – or they wait several weeks to report it. This time lag allows the bad guys to move and hide the money overseas before

we even have a chance to stop the transaction through the banks.

So what can businesses do?

Here are a few options:

- Avoid free web-based email accounts. Establish a company domain name and use it to create formal email addresses for your employees.

- Check the "rules" setting on your account periodically to ensure that no one has set up auto-forwarding for your emails.

- Be careful what you post to social media and your company website, especially information about who has which specific job duties. Also be cautious about using out-of-office replies that give too much detail about when your executives are out of the mix.

- Require two-factor

verification for money transfers, particularly big ones. For example – you could require a telephone call to confirm significant wire transfers. Be sure to set up this protocol early in the business relationship and outside the email environment. When the fraudster hacks your email account, you don't want him to be able to see how to evade your security protocols.

- Also, require your employees to use two-factor authentication to access corporate email accounts. They would need two pieces of information to log-in... something they know (such as a password) and something they have (such as a dynamic PIN that changes constantly).

- When confirming money transfer requests, don't rely on

phone numbers or email addresses embedded in the request. Look up the number from an external source when calling.

- Train your employees to watch for suspicious requests – such as a change in a vendor's payment location.

- Train your employees to avoid clicking on links or attachments from unknown senders. Doing so could download malware onto your company's computers, making you vulnerable to a hack.

If you have been victimized by this scam or any other online scam, contact the FBI immediately. You can file an online report at the FBI's Internet Crime Complaint Center at www.ic3.gov or call your FBI local office.

Today in History: by The Associated Press

Today is Wednesday, Dec. 5, the 339th day of 2018. There are 26 days left in the year.

Today's Highlight in History:

On Dec. 5, 1994, Republicans chose Newt Gingrich to be the first GOP speaker of the House in four decades.

On this date:

In 1776, the first scholastic fraternity in America, Phi Beta Kappa, was organized at the College of William and Mary in Williamsburg, Va.

In 1782, the eighth president of the United States, Martin Van Buren, was born in Kinderhook, New York; he was the first chief executive to be born after American independence.

In 1791, composer Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart died in Vienna, Austria, at age 35.

In 1792, George Washington was re-elected president; John Adams was re-elected vice president.

In 1848, President James K. Polk triggered the Gold Rush of '49 by confirming that gold had been discovered in California.

In 1901, movie producer Walt Disney was born in

Chicago.

In 1932, German physicist Albert Einstein was granted a visa, making it possible for him to travel to the United States.

In 1933, national Prohibition came to an end as Utah became the 36th state to ratify the 21st Amendment to the Constitution, repealing the 18th Amendment.

In 1945, five U.S. Navy torpedo bombers mysteriously disappeared after taking off from Fort Lauderdale, Florida, on a training mission with the loss of all 14 crew members; "The Lost Squadron" contributed to the legend of the Bermuda Triangle.

In 1952, the Great Smog of London descended on the British capital; the unusually thick fog, which contained toxic pollutants, lasted five days and was blamed for causing thousands of deaths.

In 1977, Egypt broke diplomatic relations with Syria, Libya, Algeria, Iraq and South Yemen in the wake of criticism that followed President Anwar Sadat's peace overtures to Israel.

In 1988, a federal grand jury in North Carolina indicted PTL founder Jim Bakker and former aide Richard Dortch on fraud and

conspiracy charges. (Bakker was convicted on all counts; Dortch pleaded guilty to four counts and cooperated with prosecutors in exchange for a lighter sentence. Bakker was initially sentenced to 45 years in prison; the term was eventually reduced to eight years, and he served a total of about five.)

Ten years ago: The Labor Department reported that an alarming half-million jobs had vanished in Nov. 2008 as unemployment hit a 15-year high of 6.7 percent. A judge in Las Vegas sentenced O.J. Simpson to 33 years in prison (with eligibility for parole after nine) for an armed robbery at a hotel room. (Simpson was released to parole on Oct. 1, 2017.) Death claimed actresses Nina Foch age 84 and Beverly Garland at age 82.

Five years ago: Nelson Mandela, the anti-apartheid leader who became South Africa's first black president, died at age 95.

One year ago: Democratic congressman John Conyers of Michigan resigned from Congress after a nearly 53-year career, becoming the first Capitol Hill politician to lose his job amid the sexual misconduct allegations sweeping through the nation's workplaces. In a bitterly contested runoff election, Atlanta voters narrowly chose Keisha Lance Bottoms as the city's next mayor; a result that would be upheld after a recount requested by rival Mary Norwood. The International Olympic Committee barred Russia and its sports leaders from the upcoming Winter Olympics in South Korea

after concluding that members of the Russian government concocted a doping scheme at the 2014 Sochi Games; some Russians would be able to compete as "Olympic Athletes from Russia."

Thought for Today:

"I've never been poor, only broke. Being poor is a frame of mind. Being broke is only a temporary situation." — Mike Todd, American movie producer (1907-1958).



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Gooseberry Delight
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Breakfast Menu

2 Egg Scramble with Toast
Your choice meat, cheese, vegetables & toast.
\$3.59 ea.
Reg. \$4.69

Salad Case

Kale Salad
\$5.49 lb.
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Grab-N-GO

Liege Waffle with Chocolate Drizzle
\$1.99 ea.
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Meat

Beeler's Lil Bites..... \$4.89 ea.
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Organic Praire Summer Sausage..... \$10.99 ea.
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Organic Green Cabbage 79¢ lb.
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