



Computer Integrated Services

SECURITY BULLETIN – FIRST QUARTER, 2017

To Our Valued Clients,

Welcome to the first of our planned Quarterly Security Bulletins, prepared by CIS’ Chief Information Officer, Anthony Fama. The purpose of these bulletins is to help strengthen IT Security awareness within our client base. CIS strives to provide our clients with the critical information they need, in an actionable format, to support the decision making process, and ensure stability, efficiency, and security of client environments. For further information, please contact your Account Manager or the CIS Service Desk.

Two years ago, during various seminars and presentations that I conducted, I advised the audience members to *always* call a phone number provided in an email BEFORE clicking on any links. **ANY** links. As we head into 2017, that advice has had to change. There was a time not so long ago where everyone in the security field referenced a metric stating that approximately 70% of all breaches come from inside the network. This has since changed dramatically. More attacks come from outside the network now. Without direct contact or detailed researching, utilizing almost exclusively voluntarily contributed social media content, it has become quite easy to lure a target into clicking an executable buried in a file purported to be a friend’s vacation photos, or a critical attachment from a superior.

AWARENESS is the first step in any information security program. The advice provided today is to NOT call a phone number given to you in an email at all. Today’s “phishing” and “spear phishing” messages have grown far more sophisticated, utilizing the impersonated company’s URL or a highly similar version, formatting, and content, with minor redirections to nefarious partners. An example is provided below:

To: “You”

From: “American Express” <AccountServices@americanexpress.com.ru

Subject: Account compromised

Please note that recent activity has given us cause to believe your account has been compromised and your PIN has been stolen. Please call 555-555-5555 so that we may remedy this situation most expediently and the use of your card will not be interrupted.

The example above provides a phone number that a ‘diligent’ person would call to address this situation and verify that the email is legitimate, prior to clicking any links or providing any secure information. Today, receiving that verification call is the actual goal of the email. Entire call centers are set up to receive these verification calls, ask you



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for your current credit card and PIN and tell you they will send you a new one in the mail. Both card and PIN... this is *always* a sign of a scam.

We are now advising all clients, should you receive ANY email containing ANY link or phone number that you were not advised of beforehand by the sender, do not click nor call. Simply pull out your credit card, the contact information given to you directly by a vendor, or another reliable source for contact details (Google, Yelp, etc) and call the number company directly.



Fama's Laws of IT Security #242: ***NEVER*** follow up with the contacts provided in an unanticipated email. If it looks bogus, it *probably* is bogus. Call or email the company that you actually work with.

There are countless examples of intricate sophisticated scams such as this, far too many to detail or track, with new approaches emerging on an hourly basis. To paraphrase Thomas Jefferson: the price of electronic communication is eternal vigilance. In other words, the only way to be fully protected is to be constantly up to date on, and mindful of, such issues. Our goal is to provide the 'awareness' that these scenarios exist. And, of course, what you should do about them.

Please reach out to your sales rep and we can set up a call to discuss further safeguards to protect your company's data and information from theft or viruses.

Once again, I wish you well, and safe computing.

Cordially,

Anthony Fama | Partner - Chief Information Officer

Computer Integrated Services | *It's All About the Client.*

p: (516) 984-5536 e: afama@cisus.com w: www.cisus.com