



INTERNET CRIME COMPLAINT CENTER'S (IC3) SCAM ALERTS



This report, which is based upon information from law enforcement and complaints submitted to the IC3, details recent cyber crime trends and new twists to previously-existing cyber scams.

AUTOMATED CLEARING HOUSE (ACH) SPAM

The IC3 and National Cyber-Forensics and Training Alliance (NCFTA) were made aware of a spam campaign around February 24, 2011 using spoofed e-mail addresses to make it look like they are from legitimate payment organizations. The message in the spam e-mail had variations of the following example:

"The ACH transaction, recently initiated from your checking account (by you or any other person), was cancelled by the Electronic Payments Association. Click on the link to view details."

Electronic Payments Associations have frequently been used as a social engineering ploy by cyber criminals, according to open source information. Phishing alerts have been posted, and the organizations are aware that cyber criminals are using their name to deceive users into compromising their personally identifiable information.

According to analysis, this current use of the ACH organization is part of a new Zeus Botnet spam run intended to infect victims with malicious software. The links provided in the e-mails direct users to websites set up with HTML frame code to pull content from additional sources and deliver malware via JavaScript exploits.

The Zeus Botnet has historically been used by fraudsters perpetrating ACH fraud, so it is not surprising the ACH name is being exploited to direct users to websites propagating the Zeus malware.

LOTTERY SCAMMERS NOW MISUSING PUBLIC SERVICES

The IC3 has received several complaints from victims who reported receiving telephone calls from a Jamaican subject claiming they were lottery winners. The subject told victims to first wire funds for various expenses, such as taxes and other handling fees, to collect the lottery winnings. The subject threatened many victims with physical violence if they refused to wire money. The subjects were identified as Jamaican through their accents and verification of numbers displayed on the victim's caller ID.

Though this scam is not new, the subjects continue to develop new methods to further their fraudulent scheme. For example, the IC3 received a complaint in which an elderly individual had fallen victim to the lottery scam. After the victim's family interceded and stopped the liquidation of the victim's funds, the subject sent a taxi cab to take the victim to a major retail establishment that offered wire transfer services, hoping the victim would wire the funds as requested.

In other instances, after elderly victims realized they were being defrauded and stopped participating in the lottery scam, the subjects asked local law enforcement to conduct a "well-being" check on the victims. However, during the courtesy checks, the victims told law enforcement about the lottery scams and avoided further victimization. Apparently, the fraudsters tried to use law enforcement to further coerce the victims into again communicating with, or sending funds to, the fraudsters.

POTASSIUM IODIDE PRICE GOUGING

In the wake of the recent disasters in Japan and the widespread fear of how radiation may impact health, the IC3 has received complaints related to potential price gouging of potassium iodide supplements. Potassium iodide is a salt of stable iodine that is an important chemical needed by the body to make thyroid hormones. Potassium iodide is normally absorbed through daily nutrition. Incapable of distinguishing iodine types, the thyroid readily absorbs both radioactive and stable iodine. Potassium iodide works by filling the thyroid with stable iodine so it cannot absorb any more iodine, including radioactive iodine, for 24 hours.

A variety of websites sell potassium iodide online, with the majority of the websites being vitamin retailers. Other websites are specifically dedicated to nuclear disaster preparation. Prices are generally under \$10 for a bottle of pills or a vial of liquid potassium iodide. However, some prices are in the \$20-\$50 range, and a few sellers on an on-line marketplace are selling tablets in the \$200-\$300 range. Quantities and strength of the tablets or liquid vary, so not all prices are equivalent.

Potassium iodide can be found in prescription and over-the-counter formats. Although it is available over the counter, users should consult with a physician regarding dosage amounts and any potential drug interactions or side effects.

For more information regarding online scams visit our [Press Room](#) page for the most current Public Service Announcements.

<https://www.ic3.gov/media/default.aspx>