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Malicious Software Features Usama bin Laden Links to Ensnare Unsuspecting Computer Users

The FBI today warns computer users to exercise caution when they receive e-mails that purport to show photos or videos of Usama bin Laden's recent death. This content could be a virus that could damage your computer. This malicious software or "malware" can embed itself in computers and spread to users' contact lists, thereby infecting the systems of associates, friends and family members. These viruses are often programmed to steal your personally identifiable information.

The Internet Crime Complaint Center (IC3) urges computer users to not open unsolicited (spam) e-mails, including clicking links contained within those messages. Even if the sender is familiar, the public should exercise due diligence. Computer owners must ensure they have up-to-date firewall and anti-virus software running on their machines to detect and deflect malicious software.

The IC3 recommends the public do the following:

- Adjust the privacy settings on social networking sites you frequent to make it more difficult for people you know and do not know to post content to your page. Even a "friend" can unknowingly pass on multimedia that's actually malicious software.
- Do not agree to download software to view videos. These applications can infect your computer.
- Read e-mails you receive carefully. Fraudulent messages often feature misspellings, poor grammar and nonstandard English.
- Report e-mails you receive that purport to be from the FBI. Criminals often use the FBI's name and seal to add legitimacy to their fraudulent schemes. In fact, the FBI does not send unsolicited e-mails to the public. Should you receive unsolicited messages that feature the FBI's name, seal or that reference a division or unit within the FBI or an individual employee, report it to the Internet Crime Complaint Center at www.ic3.gov.