# Latest Social Networking Scams

By Denise Richardson

Social networking sites such as Twitter, MySpace and Facebook are a great way to stay in touch with friends and family. Unfortunately, many scammers see these social networking sites as ripe hunting grounds filled with potential new victims. Falling prey to their scams can give them access to your account, allow them to harvest your personal information, and in some cases may even infect your computer with spyware or viruses. To make matters worse, your friends will likely be invited to check out the scam on what looks like your recommendation.

Tweet

(function() {
var s = document.createElement('SCRIPT'), s1 = document.getElementsByTagName('SCRIPT')[0];
s.type = 'text/javascript';
s.src = 'http://widgets.digg.com/buttons.js';
s1.parentNode.insertBefore(s, s1);
})();

The latest social networking scams come in a few different varieties: some are fake "shock" sites or fan pages, others claim to be celebrity or amazing videos, and some are fake apps that claim they will add something useful to your profile page. Others scam you into taking surveys for which the scam creator gets paid. To better protect yourself, your computer and your identity from the scam artists who create these social networking scams it's important that you learn to recognize the different types of scams that are currently popular.

Fake "Shock" Sites or Pages

These scams are designed to grab your interest and to get you to help spread the scam page to your friends. The posts that appear on your friends' feed will say something like, "I can't believe that this girl killed herself after her dad posted this!" or "Look at what this kid did after being expelled!" When you click on the link you get a "This App Wants Permission..." box that you have to approve, or you have to "Become a Fan" of the page. The end result is generally fake or blank and the scammer has access to your email address or other personal details.

Fake Videos

These are similar to the "shock" pages with the main difference being that they claim to show funny videos or videos of celebrities such as Miley Cyrus behaving badly. Most often you are directed off of the social networking site to reach the "video", but first you have to fill out a survey. Once the survey is finished you might have to do another, and another, and another; they continue until you give up or are shown a picture or video that's nothing like what you thought you'd to see. Meanwhile, the scammer gets paid for the surveys you took.

Fake Apps

These scams can be anything from fake quizzes that require you to take surveys to get your results to apps that claim they give you free items in popular games on MySpace or Facebook. Some of these fake apps may take you to other websites that are designed to look like the social networking site you came from, asking you to sign in again so that they can steal your user name and password. Remember that no social networking games require you to get items from third-party apps, and never enter your password on any site that doesn't have the exact web address that you have

bookmarked.
Other Scams

New scams appear on social networking sites every day. Many are similar to the ones mentioned above, while some have actual scammers contacting people and pretending to be in the military or down on their luck to solicit sympathy and eventually ask for help of some kind. Always make sure that you know who you're talking to online, especially if they ask you for money or personal information.
How to avoid Scams

Predators of all sorts frequent social networking sites but if you keep informed of the latest scams and techniques used to con you out of your personal data or hard-earned money, you will be less likely to fall victim to their scams.

For more info on Social Networking and Identity theft see: Identity theft in the Age of Social Media.

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