

As Summer Begins Vacation Scams Abound

June 4, 2015 â€“ Itâ€™s that time of year again when families pack up the kids and head for a relaxing week or two of vacation. Millions of Americans will spend billions of dollars over the next three months on everything from relaxing beach cottages to zip-lining in the Amazon rain forest. Any time you have that kind of money at stake, scam artists will come out of the woodwork and try to get a piece of it. And online scams appear to be their weapon of choice.

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  s.type = 'text/javascript';  
  s.src = 'http://widgets.digg.com/buttons.js';  
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})();
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  po.src = 'https://apis.google.com/js/plusone.js';  
  var s = document.getElementsByTagName('script')[0]; s.parentNode.insertBefore(po, s);  
})();
```

The process of turning you from a prospective vacationer into a scam victim isnâ€™t as difficult as you might think. Since many online scams use websites with slightly different names than their legitimate counterparts, arriving at such a site can be as simple as misspelling the siteâ€™s name when you type it into your browser. But you might also arrive there by clicking on an advertisement that looks perfectly legitimate.

Once on such a site, you may find some great deals! You know, the types that seem too good to be true! That may be your first clue that youâ€™re about to get scammed. Before you buy, you should do a little homework. Start by looking at the internet address of the site you are visiting and make sure you spelled it correctly.

If address checkâ€™s out, then look up the phone number of the hotel, airline or other business you are thinking about booking and call them. Donâ€™t rely on the phone number provided by the booking site you are on. If the site is fake, then the phone numbers they are going to furnish you will likely put you in contact with a crook who will simply tell you that the deal is good. It is in your best interest to take the ten seconds required to Google the phone number on your own.

Scams come in a couple of varieties. In many cases, if you go through with your vacation purchase, youâ€™ll eventually find

out that the money you spent didn't buy you a thing. But in some cases, you'll still get your airline tickets and hotel room but you'll pay a number of unnecessary fees. Either way, the scam artists have managed to separate you from your money. In the process, they've also gotten enough information from you to commit identity theft.

The old adage, "buyer beware" applies here.

by Jim Malmberg

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