

More Coronavirus Scams

April 10, 2020 - There are some new scams that we've become aware of that revolve around Coronavirus. Given the fact that the country is largely locked down, it is no great surprise that criminals are viewing this time as an opportunity to capitalize on peoples' fear.

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(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);
})();
```

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(function() {
var po = document.createElement('script'); po.type = 'text/javascript'; po.async = true;
po.src = 'https://apis.google.com/js/plusone.js';
var s = document.getElementsByTagName('script')[0]; s.parentNode.insertBefore(po, s);
})();
```

I Need Money!

This one requires just a little bit of work on the part of the scam artists using it. But, not a lot of work.

You receive an email message that appears to come from someone you know. It could be a friend, family member, co-worker or even your boss. The message is a sad tale of hard luck. It may tell you that the person sending it is out of a job and won't be able to make this month's rent or mortgage payment. Or it may tell you that your friend had Coronavirus but because they are now unemployed, they have not insurance and the medical bills are stacking up. You get the idea.

You'll then be asked to wire some money. It may give a specific amount, or it may ask you for anything you can spare. Either way, the message is believable and a lot of people are vulnerable to it.

If you receive any messages like this, pick up the phone and call the person who supposedly sent it to you. If they didn't actually send it, it's a scam. This one is hitting co-workers and boss-employee relationships especially hard because it is fairly easy to find out the names of several people working for the same company and their email addresses are often public. We're advising employers to make sure they talk to their employees about this.

Masked Home Invaders and Armed Robbers

A month ago, if you had walked into a store wearing a mask, there is a pretty good chance that the store security guard would have followed your every move. Today, if you attempt to walk into a store without a mask, there is an equally good chance that the security guard won't let you in. That's how much times have changed.

That change has put everyone at greater risk for victimization. There have been a number of reports of people wearing masks and showing up at someone's front door claiming to be from a company that they trust. They could be claiming to be the mailman, the meter-reader for a local utility, or even a delivery driver. Once you open the door to your home, you could find out that you're facing an armed intruder.

There are some things you can do to protect yourself. If you have a door camera or a peak hole, ask the person at the door to remove their mask so that you can see their entire face. Let them know that they can put the mask back on before you open the door. If you have a camera, let them know that they are being photographed and that you want a photo that can be identified if there is a problem. Most criminals are probably going to leave at that point.

Whatever you do, if you have a system like Ring that allows you to respond to the doorbell whether or not you're at home, don't let the person at the door know if you aren't there. That's simply an invite at this point to break into your home.

As always, we'll let you know as we come across more scams.

by Jim Malmberg

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