CYBERSECURITY

Safety & Training

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eSource

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A monthly resource for members of IMEA's Safety, Education & Training program

NATIONAL CYBERSECURITY AWARENESS MONTH

PREVENT PHISHING FROM OCCURING

This is a great opportunity to brush up on your security practices and also learn new techniques that keep your identity and data safe from harm. While there are virtually endless tips and tricks you can take to heart in improving your personal cybersecurity, some of which involve the use of complex and specific technologies like virtual private networks, let's keep it simple and focus on phishing.

Phishing is a rudimentary but highly effective cyberattack. Unlike more sophisticated attacks, it is difficult to stop with modern cybersecurity solutions because it exploits human weakness, namely to trust communications that seem legitimate. Over 90 percent of cyberattacks may begin with phishing.

1.) **Be skeptical of emails with urgent subject lines or calls of action**
There's a common technique in some political campaigns of sending direct email disguised as official documentation, to make a response more likely. If in doubt, do not engage.

2.) **Don't click any link you're unsure about**
Links are the active ingredients of phishing emails, the components that actually make the scams work. After reading through the boilerplate text about how someone will need personal and private information on a strange website, you'll likely be asked to click on something.

3.) **Never send sensitive information over email or an unsecured website**
Email is unavoidable for most people. It's undoubtedly a quick and easy way to communicate, but it has major shortcomings in terms of its security. Any email that isn't digitally signed and/or encrypted could have been tampered with, and it's possible for message to be intercepted and read, too.
Since email encryption is relatively complex, a more practical approach for most people is to avoid sending any really sensitive details over email at all, whether you're being asked by someone you know or, especially a stranger who may be scamming you. A common phishing tactic is to solicite incriminating information via unencrypted connection like HTTP websites.

From the Desk of Duane Richardson

Organizations know they're at risk! Are You Ready?

Organizations are concerned about cybersecurity, but their tech teams, if they have them, aren't necessarily prepared to fend off an attack.

The percentage of security professionals who are confident in their organizations ability to prevent and fight cyberattacks has dropped from 87 percent to 75 percent over the last year. Moreover, 42 percent of those who are confident in their teams report they feel their team could handle only minor incidents. It's not new news that trained professionals are really required in order to meet the challenges being created by the increasing threat.

I think the first thing is leaders should recognize that this isn't someone else's problem. It happened to Target, as well as Home Depot. The reality is, all of us are being attacked on a daily basis. There's a likelihood that we're going to have our information exposed, and regardless of what we do, every organization will always be vulnerable. Organizations from top to bottom must recognize cybersecurity as a serious matter and take appropriate actions.

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TIPS FOR PREVENTING PHISHING

4.) **Know all signs of a phishing email**
We've already discussed faux-urgency as a tip-off of a phishing email, but it's hardly the only one. Others to look out for include:

- Misspellings.
- Grammatical mistakes.
- Including your email address in the subject line.
- No acknowledgement of your name.
- Requests to verify your account.
- Warnings that your account has been compromised.

With this knowledge and the practices we've covered already, you can greatly reduce the risk of being a phishing victim.

DON'T RUSH TO CLICK HYPERLINKS

Hyperlinks are tricky. When they're included in text, you can't immediately see where they lead, meaning a simple click could take you somewhere you don't want to go, like an adware-infested page. Consider hovering over them with a mouse, or copying them with a press and hold contextual menu on a touchscreen and pasting them into a separate document, before following them.

WIFI HOTSPOTS

Public wireless networks and hotspots are not always secure, which means that anyone could potentially see what you are doing on your mobile device while you are connected. Limit what you do on public WiFi and avoid logging in to key accounts like email and financial services on these networks. Consider using a virtual private network (VPN) or a personal / mobile hotspot if you need a more secure connection on the go.

BEWARE CYBER RISKS YOU MAY FACE WHEN USING SOCIAL MEDIA

Don't over share personal information on social media. Sensitive information includes anything that can help a person steal your identity or find you, such as your full name, Social Security number, address, birthdate, phone number, or where you were born.

Thanks to You for participating as an IMEA Associate Member!

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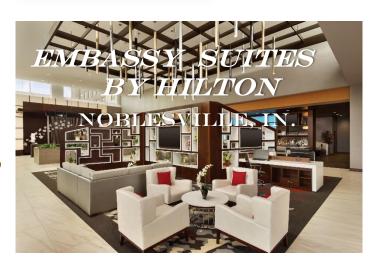cpowers@americanenergy.us
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