



Computer Corner

Internet Scam Alert: Beware Of "Vishers"

(NAPSA)—A few tips can help protect you from a new type of scam used by identity thieves.

The scam, known as "vishing," involves criminals using Internet phone services (called VoIP) to trick consumers into revealing information about their bank accounts and credit card numbers over the phone.

Here's how it works: A criminal calls you at home or sends an e-mail that asks you to call a local number. In either case, the criminal pretends to be someone from your bank or financial institution. Because the phone number on your caller ID or in your e-mail appears to be a local one, you might feel safe in calling it. However, the truth could be that the scam artist is using VoIP technology to "own" a local phone number, and that he actually lives in a different state.

Avoiding Vishers

Following these tips from Geeks On Call can help keep you from being victimized:

- Don't give your credit card numbers, checking account numbers or Social Security number to unknown callers.

- Don't let a caller pressure you into revealing anything private about yourself.

- Be very, very suspicious of any e-mails that appear to be from your bank or financial institution. Usually, they will never contact you by e-mail.

- If you think your bank or financial institution is really trying to contact you, don't respond to any e-mails and don't talk to anyone who calls you. Instead,



There are some easy ways to avoid a new type of identity theft scam called vishing.

call the main number for your bank or financial institution found on your bank statements, in your local phone book, or on the back of your credit card or check card.

- The safest option is to visit your bank and ask them in person whether or not they are trying to contact you.

Reporting Scams

If you suspect a vishing scam:

- Contact your bank or financial institution

- Contact the Federal Trade Commission (FTC) by calling (877) FTC-HELP

- Report fraudulent PayPal e-mails by forwarding them to spoof@paypal.com

- Contact the Internet Crime Complaint Center at <http://www.ic3.gov/complaint>.

This information comes from the experts at Geeks On Call, who provide on-site computer services to homes and businesses across America. To contact them, visit www.geeksoncall.com or call (800) 905-GEEK.