



Mass Marketing Fraud Trend Bulletin:

Anti-Virus Scams

2011-04-15

Purpose

This bulletin was prepared to provide an overview of a service scam involving fraudulent solicitations offering anti-virus software.

Overview

- In February 2011, CAFC analysts were alerted to an increase in the number of complaints being received involving fraudulent telephone solicitation for anti-virus software by investigators in Manitoba and Ontario. This scam has been proliferating since March 2010.
- In the scheme, company representatives cold call individuals and state that, for example, their computer is running slow or has viruses. They then offer to repair the computer over the Internet, which can involve the installation of software or the customers allowing the representatives remote access to their computer. Payment for the software or repair service is handled via credit card.
- Allowing a third party to download software or remotely access a computer carries inherent risks. Keyloggers or other malicious software could be installed to capture sensitive data such as online banking user names and passwords, bank account information, identity information, etc
- Between 2010-01-01 and 2011-03-02, the Canadian Anti-Fraud Centre (CAFC) received approximately 350 complaints of this type. Company names that contained "MICROSOFT," "WINDOWS", JARS SUPPORT or "ONLINE PC CARE" were prevalent in the complaints.
- Follow up to date by CAFC analysts indicates, that consumers in the United Kingdom are also receiving these solicitations and that some are originating from a call centre in India. Credit card charges have ranged from \$35.00 to \$469.00 and are being debited by banks in Germany, Latvia, Russia, Ukraine, Mauritius, United States and Iceland.
- Other variations of the scam also involve consumers responding to pop-up ads online offering anti-virus software. These pop-ups are often referred to as Scareware as the message in the pop-up is commonly crafted to entice feelings of alarm and anxiety. That there is a threat to their computer if they don't click on the link

Indicators

- Unsolicited call representing computer repair-company.
- Caller requesting access to your computer or for you to view your event viewer.
- Urgent solicitation indicating there is a threat to your computer.
- Credit card charges in amounts ranging from \$35.00 to \$469.00
- Credit card charges from foreign banks

Outlook

This bulletin was prepared to provide an overview of the Anti-Virus scam and a list of indicators that may assist in identifying these fraudulent solicitations. If you think you or someone you know has been a victim of fraud please contact the Canadian Anti-Fraud Centre 1-888-495-8501 or www.antifraudcentre.ca.

Fraud Recognize It, Report It, Stop It.