How to Spot a Phish

Finding the phish 101 with Professor Troy

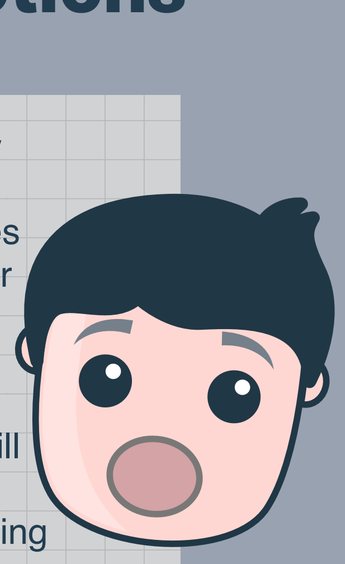
Lesson 1: Watch out for emotions

Greed

Phishing emails often dangle a financial reward of some kind if you click a link or enter your login information. If an email offers you something that seems too good to be true, it probably is.

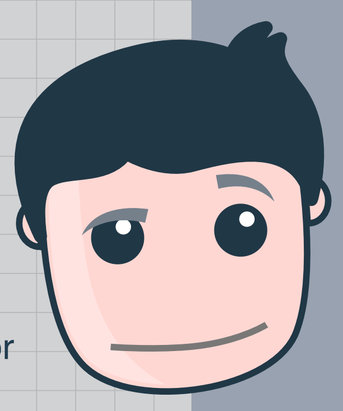
Urgency

If an email provides a strict deadline for performing an action -- be suspicious. Phishing emails will try to fluster recipients by creating a sense of urgency.



Curiosity

People are naturally curious, and phishers take advantage of this by sending emails that promise to show us something exciting or forbidden.



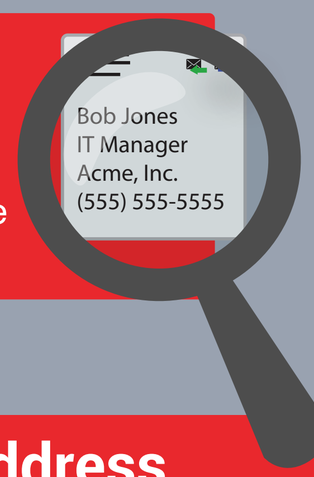
Fear

Scaring recipients is a common tactic in phishing emails. Emails that threaten you with negative consequences or punishment should be treated with suspicion.

Lesson 2: Examine these items closely

Email Signatures

A signature block that is overly generic or doesn't follow company protocols could indicate that something is wrong.

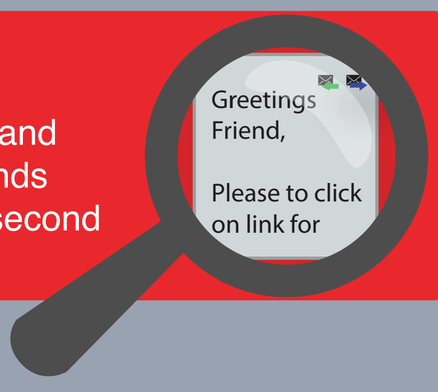


Sender Address

If the address doesn't match the sender name, be suspicious of the entire email.

Email Tone

We know how our co-workers and friends talk, so if an email sounds strange, it's probably worth a second look.



Lesson 3: Look for common indicators of a phish

Attachments

If you receive an unexpected or unusual attachment, always verify with the sender via phone.

From: Joe Smith
To: Troy Foster
Subject: WebMail Migration

Attachment -- Webmail_Migration.pdf

Troy,

This is to inform you that we are in the processing of m
to the Windows 2003 platform, which includes an exci
e-mail.

Attached is a document outlining the benefits of the m
migration we request you to enter your Windows password before 8 PM on Tuesday.
Failure to do so will result in being locked out of your email account!

Please click here to update your password.

Thank You,
John Smith

Log-in Pages

Spear phishers will often spoof websites to look legitimate in order to steal your credentials.

Links

Roll your mouse pointer over the link and see if what pops up matches what's in the email. If they don't match, don't click.

If you see something, say something!

Report suspected phishing emails to the information security team

COFENSE