Job Hunting Scams

Phishing 101

January 25, 2022

Summary

Phishing scams have evolved in the 21st century from simple job scams advertising for nonexistent positions to scheming for your personal information and data. With the onset on the COVID-19 pandemic, these scams have become more present in our day-to-day lives as work has shifted to remote and virtual settings.

In this safety campaign by TMASF Connects, we will provide you with facts, statistics, and ways to keep yourself safe. TMASF Connects has conducted an interview series with a local jobseeker, Michael D., about his phishing experiences. **CLICK HERE** to see the video series!

Facts & Statistics

LinkedIn's transparency report found that from June to December 2020, 11.6 million potentially fraudulent accounts were stopped at registration, an additional 3 million were removed prior to a report, and 111,000 were removed after reporting. Furthermore, 22.4 million posts or job listings flagged as spam or scams were removed prior to a report, with another 225,000 posts or listings removed after reporting.

The Better Business Bureau conducted a study on job scams in 2020 and estimated that 14 million people are exposed each year causing $2 billion a year in direct losses.

Phishing scams are happening closer than you know. UC Berkeley and San Francisco State University both have articles on protecting yourself while using Handshake, a job and internship platform used by many higher education institutions in the Bay Area.

What's at Risk?

In addition to obtaining a copy of your most current resume, these scams may deceive you into revealing your salary history, sending a copy of your ID or passport, and your bank account or Social Security number. With this information, scammers can steal your identity, bounce checks, and open up lines of credit, among other activities.

For More Information

The Federal Trade Commission has an article on how to identify and protect yourself from phishing scams as well as job scams. If you suspect that fraudulent activity is in progress, you can report it HERE or by calling the FTC at 1-877-382-4357.

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CAUTION

Types of Scams

Indeed published an article in 2021 on the types of phishing scams which have been especially prevalent during the COVID-19 pandemic:

Job Posting Scams: In addition to a suspicious email address or unusual job details, they may require you to provide financial or sensitive personal information during the job application process

Unemployment Benefits Scams: Scammers will make unsolicited contact with you to initiate unemployment benefits claims. In addition to asking for your personal information, they may charge a fee to file your claim

Social Security Scams: These come in the form of robocalls, text messages, or letters that ask for payment to prevent loss of benefits.

SELF-SCREENING

Ask yourself these questions if you suspect you may be interacting with a scammer:

- Do I feel like I am being pushed or guided along?
- Am I being asked to provide personal information very early on in the process?
- Is the job interview taking place exclusively over the phone, over phone chat and only over text messages?
- Have I even seen this person face-to-face yet?
- Why do they not invite me for an in-person interview?

RED FLAGS

- You are contacted through a non-company email domain like Yahoo or Gmail
- You are requested to provide money or goods, personal information, or salary history before you've applied or started
- Emails or job listings are full of errors and the job description or requirements are vague
- They attempt to keep the conversation over text, a chat messenger, or over the phone
- They are evasive about your questions or concerns
- The job is offered without an interview or is too good to be true
- The salary is unrealistic

Photo Courtesy of FlexJobs

Protecting Yourself

- Do an online search: Verify the identity of the company, employer, or recruiter on Google and LinkedIn.
- **NEVER** pay or transfer money or goods, or provide sensitive personal information
- Get a second opinion from someone you trust
- Check the company's website to verify that the job listing you saw was legitimate
- Do not feel pressured into responding to a fast-hiring process
- Don't accept offers you didn't apply for
- If you are going to an in-person interview, make sure someone knows where you are

Source: Novoresume