
Message is a phish attempt, says CUNA

MADISON, Wis. (12/31/08)--An e-mail circulating Tuesday purports to be from the Credit Union National Association (CUNA), but CUNA says the e-mail is a phishing scam seeking personal information.

The e-mail claims to be from CUNA's customer service and has as its subject line "Your card has been deactivated." It claims to have disabled the recipient's card and personal identification number (PIN) and asks the recipient to call 800-587-9804.

CUNA and any financial institution would not send e-mails or phone messages soliciting account and identification information. Recipients should delete the message.

The message is similar to a number of phishing-type scams involving e-mails, text messaging to cell phones, automated calls and in-person calls to home phone lines, and more.

In November, the RSA Anti-Fraud Command Center noted a 20% increase from October in the number of banking brands attacked by fraudsters. Attacks against new entities also increased with 23 new organizations targeted in November.

However, the rate of growth of these attacks slowed down. RSA said an increase of 3,481 attacks occurred from August through October—an average of about 1,160 attacks per month. In November, the rate of increased phishing attacks slowed to 46 attacks. Regional banks were attacked most often, followed by nationwide banks and credit unions.

Earlier this month, Jefferson Parish FCU, a \$65 million asset credit union in Harahan, La., was among several institutions—including the Jefferson Parish Sheriff's Office and security firms--targeted by phishing attempts claiming to be from those institutions (*Times-Picayune* Dec. 23).

More than 450 residents received telephone calls from credit card scammers with automated messages. Sheriff Newell Normand issued a warning about the scam Dec. 21. The newspaper said at least 14 people responded with personal information.

One woman spoke to an actual person, who warned her about fraud, then got her to reveal her card information, birth date, Social Security number and her card's expiration date.

Last week, Mississippi Attorney General Jim Hood issued a warning about text messages targeting credit union members in that state (*WTOK-TV* Dec. 25). Hood had been contacted by the Mississippi Credit Union Association after several Jackson area credit union members received a text message. One person's account had to be closed, said Hood.

He noted that the best protection in such situations is education. "Consumers need to understand the scam is circulating, learn what to look out for and most important, do not respond," he told the newspaper.