College of Lake County
Connect to Your Future

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Phising Scams

Some students ask us about scams and what that is about.

Phishing is the act of attempting to acquire information such as usernames, passwords, and credit card details (and sometimes, indirectly, money) by masquerading as a trustworthy entity in an email. Communications purporting to be from popular social web sites, auction sites, online payment processors or IT administrators are commonly used to lure the unsuspecting public. Phishing emails may contain links to websites that are infected with malware. Phishing is typically carried out by email or instant messaging. It often directs users to enter details at a fake website whose look and feel are almost identical to the legitimate one. Phishing is an example of social engineering techniques used to deceive users, and exploits the poor usability of current web security technologies. Attempts to deal with the growing number of reported phishing incidents include legislation, user training, public awareness, and technical security measures.

Also, our staff has been made aware of several incidences across the country in which international students are the target of immigration-related scams. These scams often involve a phone call from an individual claiming to be from the state police, the IRS, USCIS, ICE or some other government agency. The individual may know specific information about you, such as your social security number, alien registration number or the schools you have attended. Most often, the scammer will threaten you with deportation unless you pay a certain amount of money.

Be aware that no one from a US government agency would ever threaten deportation and demand money over the phone. If you receive a similar phone call, do not give out any personal information. Ask the person for their name, who they are working for, and their phone number. Tell them you will call them back or simply just hang up. Then visit the USCIS REPORT SCAMS website, http://www.uscis.gov/avoid-scams/report-immigration-scams for information on how to properly report the scam. Remember that reporting scams will not affect your immigration status, applications, or petitions. Also, many states allow you to report scams anonymously.

For more information on how to avoid becoming a scam victim, visit the USCIS Avoid Scams website: http://www.uscis.gov/uscis-tags/unassigned/avoid-scams.

Source of this information: http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Phishing

For more information about how to protect yourself, you might want to read these:
Microsoft – How to Recognize Scam Emails and Phone Calls
https://support.microsoft.com/en-us/help/4033787/windows-protect-yourself-from-phishing
FDIC – Consumer Information about Bank Scams
http://www.fdic.gov/consumers/consumer/alerts/phishing.html