COT Security Alert – Seasonal Scam Awareness

Phishing scams and malware campaigns that take advantage of the winter holidays and shopping season are expected to increase in the upcoming weeks. Users are urged to remain cautious concerning unsolicited email messages or browsing online, whether they are on a home or work computer.

Popular forms of phishing scams and malware campaigns during this season include:

- Infected electronic greeting cards.
- Phishing scams from illegitimate sources claiming to be charities.
- Infected screensavers or other free media with holiday or seasonal themes.
- Phishing scams appearing to be credit card applications.
- Fraudulent online shopping advertisements.
- Surveys that include asking for personal information.
- Online contests which offer prizes. These may be engineered to appeal to a certain demographic, such as children, who may more easily divulge personal information.

Adopting cautious behavior such as the following better equips users against malicious activity.

- Never follow unsolicited web links in email messages.
- Never open attachments in unexpected emails, even if you know the sender.
- Make sure antivirus software is current on updates.
- Make sure operating system software is current on security updates.

NOTICE: COT is providing this information so that you are aware of the latest security threats, vulnerabilities, software patches, etc. You should consult with your network administrator or other technical resources to ensure that the appropriate actions for
these alerts are followed. If you are a network administrator and need additional information, please call the Help Desk at 502.564.7576.

Security Administration Branch
Commonwealth Office of Technology
120 Glenn’s Creek Road, Jones Building
Frankfort, KY 40601
COTSecurityServicesISS@ky.gov
http://technology.ky.gov/CISO/