



COT Security Alert – User Awareness of Phishing Emails

Recent phishing emails arriving in state email inboxes are soliciting username and password information. **Phishing is criminal activity.** A phishing email is an email which uses fraud in an attempt to acquire sensitive information such as usernames, passwords, bank information or credit card details by masquerading as a trustworthy entity, including those with ky.gov addresses.

When these emails are answered with logon credentials they give an unknown third party potential access to state government resources. Often this access allows the third party to send thousands of spam emails out to state users and the general public using state government email accounts and resources. This slows or ties up the state email system and uses a considerable amount of employee hours to stop the problem. In addition, the spam causes ky.gov to be placed on blacklists. Being blacklisted means that many legitimate state emails to destinations outside of the state network will not be allowed into their intended destination inboxes.

The most recent known phishing email is shown in blue below. Please remember that phishing emails change often in order to make it through any filters and to catch users off-guard. In addition, there are no filters that can guarantee that all spam or phishing emails can be blocked. It is essential that users learn to identify these emails and respond appropriately by deleting them or reporting them.

Users are advised never to respond to any email requesting username and password information no matter how legitimate it may appear. This information is never needed by COT, the user's administrator or any vendor and will never be requested by any of these entities. Technical maintenance is never reliant upon the user to supply password information to personal accounts. There are no exceptions to these statements. The user's point of contact for technical issues with accounts is their network support staff.

Sample of Recent Phishing Email:

To: info@deactivate.gov

Subject: Last Information For Account Deactivation

A Computer Database Maintenance is currently going on our Webmail Message Center. Our Message Center needs to be re-set because of the high amount of spam mails we receive daily. A Quarantine Maintenance will help us prevent this everyday dilemma.

To revalidate your mailbox Please:

CLICK HERE:

Failure to revalidate your mailbox will render your e-mail in-active from our database.

Thanks
System Administrator

End Sample

Distribution of this email to end users is recommended for security awareness purposes.

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>**