

5 Tips to Protecting Yourself from Increasing Phishing Scams

I was recently asked by my friend Pastor LL to warn our churches and congregations about the rise of Phishing Scams. This happened to a friend of hers. A recent article, "Phishing Scams Targeting Pastors: Who's Next?" basically explains how scammers pretend to be pastors from local churches emailing people for small financial assistance as not to raise any red flags. However, the damage to reputations and trustworthiness of pastors and their churches was tremendous. For more on the article - <http://www.govtech.com/blogs/lohrmann-on-cybersecurity/phishing-scams-targeting-pastors-whos-next.html>

What are Phishing Scams?

Phishing scams send emails, social media posts, text and ads that mimic reputable businesses like banks, online resources and credit card companies to trick people into sharing their financial and personal information and/or downloading malware.

Here are five simple tips to avoid Phishing Scams

1. Be cautious of all emails and messages sent to you. Be 100% sure you know who is sending you the email/message. Never click on link(s) unless you are 100% sure who it is from and you know it is 100% safe.
2. If you are not sure of the validity of the email/message use another form of communication (like phone call, text, etc.) to reach out to that person and/or entity to confirm they sent you that email/message and that it is safe to click on their link(s).
3. **Scam emails/messages are always designed to get you to react quickly and impulsively. So pause, use your common sense, and check it out before reacting.**
4. If you know the entity and need to send personal or sensitive information always make sure it is to a secure website. All secure websites have https:// and a security "lock" icon. Never use public WIFI to send sensitive information, always do it from your personal WIFI account.
5. If you receive any scam emails, before deleting forward it to the Federal Trade Commission at spam@uce.gov .

As our lives continue to connect with more digital technologies we will need to learn how to safeguard ourselves and our family in this new environment. As we navigate this fast changing technical terrain we will need to stay educated and rely more on our old fashion common sense.

Need help or have questions? Please message or email me.

Reach John Fong - Facebook Help Desk - <http://bit.ly/AskJohnFong> - johnfong@elizabethpresbytery.org

Or Text me at 732-318-7955

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