

Learn to spot dangerous e-mail, consultant advises

By **RACHEL PASTIRIK**
Internet Consultant

I received an email today from a business I have an account with, PayPal. PayPal is basically an online Western Union type of service and is used by many small and online businesses as a way for customers to pay for items and services.

This email however, was NOT from PayPal, but from someone pretending to be PayPal in order to trick customers and non-customers. There were many reasons why I knew right away that this email contained a virus.

You can look for these things in your own email to prevent virus problems down the road. Here is what the email looked like:

-----Original Message-----

From: PayPal.com

[mailto:Do_Not_Reply@paypal.com]

Sent: Saturday, February 07, 2004 8:27 AM

To: Rpastirik

Subject: IMPORTANT
ekaeajim

Importance: High

Dear PayPal member,

We regret to inform you that your account is about to be expired in next five business days. To avoid suspension of your account you have to reactivate it by providing us with your personal information. To update your personal profile and continue using PayPal services you have to run the attached application to this email. Just run it and follow the instructions. IMPORTANT! If you ignore this alert, your account will be suspended in next five business days and you will not be able to use PayPal anymore.

Thank you for using PayPal.

-----End Original Message-----

Reasons I knew to be suspicious:

1. Subject line: The subject line is labeled "IMPORTANT." If you look a little harder however, you notice that after the word "IMPORTANT" are a bunch of spaces and then the letters "ekaeajim." Virus writers are hoping you don't notice the spaces and can use what's called "email headers" to trick you into thinking the email is legit.
2. Text in the email body: "To update your personal profile and continue using PayPal services you have to run the attached application to this email." NEVER, NEVER, NEVER run any application attached to an email!! No reputable company will ever ask you to do this. This one was a dead giveaway. (Bad grammar and spelling mistakes are also a good indicator.)

See Virus, Page 2



Photo by Tim Johnson

January speaker Jill Brooks (3rd from left seated at back) showed off City of Roanoke website

VIRUS, From Page 1

3. Blocked attachments: My email program, Microsoft Outlook, saw that the attachment was an executable file and actually blocked this attachment from ever reaching my computer. After investigating, I noticed the attachment was called www.paypal.com.pif. (Other versions of this virus are being sent as www.paypal.com.scr) Have any of you ever heard of a “pif” file?

Again, no reputable company would send an attachment like this! Suspicion confirmed: After receiving this email, I looked online to get information about the virus. Specific info on this virus can be at: <http://www.millersmiles.co.uk/identitytheft/paypal-spoof-&-virus-1114031.htm>

If I had opened the attachment, a fake web page would have opened asking me to update my contact and credit card information. Then the writers of the virus would have had my credit card number. It is that easy, folks. Don't be fooled! Other companies have been reported to be having the same problem. Ebay and Half.com have all recently had virus writers sending out emails pretending to be them. Ways to protect yourself:

1. Be suspicious of all email that comes in.
 2. Never open an attachment from someone unknown to you.
 3. Install and update antivirus software frequently.
- Be aware of the threats circulating. If you aren't sure if what you have is a virus, do a quick search online.

I went to www.google.com and typed in “paypal virus hoax.” You can also call all the company if you are uncertain of the e-mail's validity.

Pastirik graduated from Radford University and lives in Salem.

The President's Desk Lionel Melancon president@rvpcc.org

Greetings constituents and a Happy New Year. I preferred “friends” but you had to go and elect me your president, so even though you are “constituents,” I hope you are all still friends. One thing for sure, since I had no platform, I can do no wrong, right.

Considering the shoes I have to fill and the condition of my feet, which is really the reason I missed the last meeting, Tim was being kind, maybe my new shoes'll help. To tell the truth, you've elected one beat-up guy. Missed the last meeting because I was spending some time with my daughter, out of town, being waited on and trying to stay off of my feet to get 'em healed.

While catering to my right one, which had a wound resulting from some poor surgery a few years ago, I got a huge blister on the heel of the other foot and have been trying to get both straightened out. My diabetes isn't helping. But just visited my foot Dr. and with a new pair of \$100 sandals that are supposed to make all better, you should see my fuzzy face next meeting, and I'll try to fill the aforementioned shoes with my aforementioned feet.

On to better subjects. Your new officers haven't had a meeting, as of this writing, but hopefully will by the time this is published. My intention is to make absolutely no changes in the way the club operates without the full consent of all the officers.

I do hope to make some suggestions for making our club even better than it already is—after all, new blood is supposed to bring in new ideas, even though it's old.

So this is my invitation to you to make any suggestions to any of the officers that will make the Roanoke Valley Personal Computer

Meet the President

Lionel Melancon, Roanoke Retired, U.S.D.A. Forest Service, Recreation and Interpretive Planner. Louisiana State University, Degree in Forest Management

His roots and heart are in the Cajun Country of Louisiana.

Computers owned:

Dell Dimension 8300, Pentium IV 1.26 GHz.

Greatest use for computer:

Writing a book, “COUSINS from ACADIA to CAJUN”

Likes: Eudora 6

Club member since late 1990s.

You might not know:

Used to cook anything; have about 250 cookbooks; don't cook much anymore just for me.

If could have any technology, what would he buy?

I think I have it, “The Journey to Wild Devine,” a computer quest game, which connects heart and respiration to computer through three finger sensors and challenges and advancements are made by controlling your biorhythms through breathing, concentration and heart rate. It's awesome!

Technology Tip:

I recommend the magazine “Discover,” which summarizes all the latest technology.

Club the very best in the East.

You know Microsoft said that of us some years ago during one of their presentations.

I'd like to hear them say that again. Oh, and thanks for making me your new president—I think.

Secretary's Report

By Margaret Hoag
secretary@rvpcc.org



Saturday, January 10, 2004

Tim Johnson called the meeting to order.

OPENING REMARKS:

Lionel Melancon, our new president, is in Forest, Va., staying with family trying to get his foot to heal. Tim hoped that everyone had a good holiday and got a few exciting "toys."

Tim Johnson moved that we elect Homer Duff as our Roanoke County Schools Representative for the coming year. Ernie Arnett seconded the motion and the motion passed.

OFFICER UPDATE:

Secretary - Margaret Ann Hoag - Announced that we were unable to approve the minutes at the last meeting due to the newsletter's late arrival. Tim Johnson moved that we approve the two months' minutes as printed in the newsletter. Ernie Arnett seconded the motion and the motion passed.

Membership - Del Kirschner - was absent due to an Income Tax Training Class.

Treasurer - Azella Tingler - All bills are paid and we have sufficient money left in the account.

Public Relations - Bill Scott - Offered to do a program on Lego Mind Storm11 and also show some different things you can do on the computer.

Public Relations/Newsletter editor - Sandra Brown Kelly - absent due to a conflicting meeting.

Roanoke County Schools - Homer Duff - Announced that the new Winter Classes would be start-

ing the early January.

Webmaster - Tim Johnson - Announced that he has updated the Web Page.

Vice President - Ernie Arnett - Announced that it was again time to have the Treasurer's Books audited. Lewis Wilson and Bob Johnson volunteered to do the job. Ernie also said that the officers needed to have a planning meeting before the February meeting.

There was a short Q and A period.
 DOOR PRIZES:

1. George Collins - CD
2. Jack Cunningham - CD Holder
3. Bob Johnson - Fancy Paper
4. Guy Plymale - Windows
5. Bill Paget - Computer Shelf
6. Lewis Wilson - Paper

PROGRAM: Tim Johnson introduced our speaker, Jill Brooks, from Roanoke City Government. Jill said that Roanoke City had won the Digital City Award for three years in a row and was very "State of the Art" and very progressive. She pulled up the Roanoke City Web Page and gave a thorough Power Point Presentation on all the information available to the public. This included everything from the City Departments, City Council, Facts and Figures, Maps, Data, Geographic Information Systems, Calendar Events, Paying Taxes and Bills, Requesting City Services, FAQs and Forms, City Code.

There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned.

**Respectfully submitted,
 Margaret Ann Hoag**

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(Club Meets 2nd Saturday of Month)

Next Meeting Date: Sat., Feb. 14, 2004

Place: Arnold R. Burton Technology Center, Room 105,
 1760 Roanoke Boulevard
 Salem, Va. 24153

Time: 9:15 AM - 12:30 PM

Program: Del Kirschner and others on Tax software

This newsletter is published by the RVPCC.



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To:

Computer tips

In the November newsletter, Tim Johnson replied to Weezie Rogers' question about hiding folders. The program Advanced Hide Folders 4.0.1 might be an answer to his problem. It is small (260KB) and easily downloaded from

www.freewarefind.com/archives/desktoparchives.html.

The description reads:

"Hide folders and files on your computer. Hidden files cannot be accessed unless the folders are unlocked with a password from within the program. Simply drag and drop folders from Windows or add files by mask (e.g. hide all .jpg files). For Windows 98/ME/2000/XP."

—Del Kirschner

Copying DVD's

Q: A friend wants to copy personal DVD's. Does anyone have any suggestion of software?

—Ernie Arnett

A: Try the free DVD Shrink software to get it smaller and on the hard drive. Then use Nero or EZCD or whatever DVD burner software he has to write it.

<http://www.dvdshrink.org/>

Tip: Make certain your anti-virus software is kept updated. The most recent virus moved

faster and messed up more than any before.

Interesting site

The Los Angeles County Museum of Art "Collections Online" <http://collectionsonline.lacma.org/> is a fully-searchable database featuring the collection 45,000 records and 27,000 digital images. It is one of the largest databases developed by an art museum in the U.S.

Accessible on the site are costumes, textiles paintings, sculptures, prints, drawings, photographs and decorative arts from the following areas: Africa, Japan, China, Korea, Southeast Asia, Europe, the U.S. and the Islamic world.

This site offers a rare opportunity to see artworks normally in storage and available only to curators.

Notable features include an image viewer where users can enlarge and compare multiple images at the same time. Several special browses are suggested, such as "monkeys," "demons" or "dragons."

Do you put 1 or 2 spaces?

When we used old-fashioned typewriters, we always put two spaces between the end of a sentence and the beginning of another.

Now, with computers some people continue to use two spaces when one will do.

The "Chicago Manual of Style" has a discussion on the topic at www.press.uchicago.edu/Misc/Chicago/cmosfaq/cmosfaq_OneSpaceorTwo.html.

The conclusion: "There is no reason for two spaces after a period in `_published_ work`."

Got a tip or question? Send it to Editor@rvpcc.org. This is a good opportunity for members to share knowledge and/or get answers—and make the newsletter better.

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