



## **THE MALWARE REPORT**

### *Tax Time Equals Tax Scams*

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#### **The Malware Report Transcript**

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Matt Grant: Hi, this is Matt Grant, and you're listening to The Malware Report with Randy Abrams.

Randy Abrams: It's great to be back, Matt.

Matt Grant: Randy, I wanted to spend some time today talking about scams associated with tax time; even if it's unfortunately that time of year. There was a recent notice from the IRS warning U.S. taxpayers to be prepared for an increase in scams and attacks via email, phone and web for that matter regarding the April 15<sup>th</sup> tax filing deadline. Have you seen any increases in attacks associated with tax season?

Randy Abrams: Actually, I do expect to, but we've seen a decrease. A lot of the credit goes to an IRS employee who I know and have worked with. He kind of had a "scorched earth" policy when he found these phishing sites. He would take drastic steps to take them down which meant taking

offline the spammers who shared the same Web site. When the IRS phishing sites lost the revenue of the spammers as well because they came after the IRS, they decided it might be prudent to lay off. It's not going to stop all of them. Yes, we're going to see, especially around the stimulus package, we're going to see tax scams.

**Matt Grant:** Yes, absolutely. That leads into my next question. Typically, the tax scams either scare consumers into thinking that there was an error with their tax filing or they're eligible for a tax rebate or benefit from the government economic stimulus packages just passed on Capitol Hill. What are some of the new scams we might see this year that are associated with the stimulus package?

**Randy Abrams:** There's nothing new under the sun. What we're going to see is a lot more of what we saw last year with that tax stimulus package. If they claim that, "If you come here, we'll help you get your stimulus rebate faster," or "You didn't claim your stimulus rebate," - which you don't need to, it's part of filing your taxes - or "You didn't claim it and we're here to help you get your money that we owe you." The simple fact is that the IRS doesn't do email unsolicited. When you see one of these emails that purports to come from the IRS, it's as simple as looking at it and saying, "this is a scam."

**Matt Grant:** Is there something both businesses and consumers should be worried about?

**Randy Abrams:** There have been some attacks that have been aimed more at businesses, those tend to be the scare tactics where they say you didn't file all your return or you didn't pay all the taxes and things like that. And again, the IRS doesn't contact businesses in this manner. The IRS uses snail mail or standard postal mail.

**Matt Grant:** Absolutely, that's a very good thing to note. So what are the main ways that users can protect themselves from these types of attacks?

Randy Abrams: If you have any question whether or not something came from the IRS and if you get an email from the IRS, you better have a question about it. Contact the IRS, take a look at the IRS Web site - they've got a lot of information about how these scams are perpetrated and how to avoid them. I would say use the free information, but it's not free information, you're paying for this information with your tax dollars. You should take advantage of it, it's important stuff to know.

Matt Grant: Now, it seems these types of attack are most prevalent now in the first four months of the year. Is there something you see continuing throughout the year?

Randy Abrams: It goes beyond throughout the year. I'm still seeing, "We've got money for you from the last stimulus package." As long as people fall for it, the bad guys will keep doing it.

Matt Grant: That's a great point to bring up to remember that unsolicited emails from the IRS don't typically exist. It's probably best to look up that phone number and contact them directly. That's certainly a great tip Randy. We certainly appreciate you being here and helping to educate us on ways to stay safe with these types of attacks. If you want any further information or have received anything from the IRS you think not be legitimate or would like to learn more, please feel free to e-mail Randy at [askeset@eset.com](mailto:askeset@eset.com). This has been Matt Grant and you've been listening to the Malware report.

[End of recorded material]