



PRESS RELEASE

For Immediate Release

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SUMMER CYBER SCAMS

Hotline.ie Warns About Online Hotel Bookings

Hotline.ie is appealing to the public to be vigilant when booking holidays online due to an increase in complaints about fake hotel booking confirmation emails. Cyber criminals are capitalising on the holiday season by sending fake booking confirmation emails containing attachments that when opened by the recipient, downloads malicious software which installs on their computer and captures the user's passwords, logons and identity. These emails are being sent at random in the hope that the thousands of Irish people booking hotels online this season will mistake the fraudulent emails as confirmation of a recent booking. Currently, over 62%* of Irish internet users book their holiday destinations and accommodation online, requiring key personal information and credit card details. With 1,234,800 Irish people holidaying abroad from January - March 2012** this figure is expected to rise during the summer months.

Commenting on this seasonal trend in online scams, Paul Durrant, Manager, Hotline.ie said:

"Booking a holiday and hotel online is perfectly safe and secure. The cyber criminals can't easily break into that so instead they are attempting to trick you into believing their spam e-mail is a receipt for a booking you may have made. The spam emails are purely random but with so many booking holidays online at this time of year, the criminals have realised their spam will reach many people who have recently completed a legitimate holiday booking. Their objective is to infect your computer with a Trojan that can gather logons, passwords and credit card details. If you are in a hurry and don't check that the email is actually from the booking service you used and you open the fake confirmation attachment, you now have their Trojan on your computer. We're warning about this scam because very little can be done to stop it but once the public is aware, they can avoid falling into the trap"

The Trojans transmit captured details back to the cyber criminals who can then transfer money out of your account or make purchases using your credit card details.

Durrant continued:

"The simple remedy is never open unexpected emails with attachments without first checking where it has come from and keep your anti-virus software up to date. Using the internet for holiday bookings definitely offers great choice and is a very cost effective option and with these safety precautions, there's no reason why it shouldn't continue to be used for this."

////Background

The Hotline, run by the Internet Service Providers Association of Ireland (www.ispai.ie) since November 1999, is part financed by the European Commission's Safer Internet Plus Programme. It is supervised by the Department of Justice, Office for Internet Safety (OIS), in cooperation with An Garda Síochána and is a member of INHOPE (www.inhope.org), the International Network of Hotlines. Hotline.ie provides an anonymous facility for the public to report suspected illegal content encountered on the Internet, in a secure and confidential way. The primary focus of the Hotline is to combat Child Pornography by having it removed expeditiously from the Internet and alerting police so they may investigate. Other forms of illegal content and activities exist on the Internet and may be reported using this service.

**Central Statistics Office*

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***Tackling Crime in our Digital Age: Establishing a European Cybercrime Centre -*
http://ec.europa.eu/home-affairs/doc_centre/crime/docs/Communication%20-%20European%20Cybercrime%20Centre.pdf#zoom=100

****SPECIAL EUROBAROMETER 359: Attitudes on Data Protection and Electronic*

Identity in the European Union -

http://ec.europa.eu/public_opinion/archives/ebs/ebs_359_en.pdf



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