



“Online Offensive – Fighting Fraud Online”

Article for general publication during the Australasian Consumer Fraud Taskforce’s Fraud Week campaign – March 1-7, 2010

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Internet scams and schemes are an escalating problem and many people fall victim every year.

This year, the Australasian Consumer Fraud Taskforce - a group of 21 Australian and New Zealand government agencies - is focussing its Fraud Week campaign on online scams. The Taskforce’s “Online Offensive – Fighting Fraud Online” campaign will run from 1-7 March and aims to increase awareness of online consumer fraud in Australasia.

The aim of the Taskforce is to reduce the incidence and impact of fraud and scams. Each year it creates a co-ordinated information campaign for consumers, timed to coincide with global consumer fraud prevention activities.

While it is difficult to be precise because many victims do not report the crime, some estimates are that one in 20 Australians is caught by scams. It is also estimated that about two-thirds of consumer fraud now occurs online.

There are many different types of scams that target consumers online. Some common types include phishing and spam emails – fake emails usually pretending to be from banks or other financial institutions. Scammers invent some reason for you to give your account details and then use these details to steal your money

Advanced fee fraud scams are prevalent and come in a variety of forms. A common type involves scammers contacting potential victims and claiming to be someone of authority like a lawyer or banker. They claim to be representing a long-lost relative of the victim and attempt to persuade the victim to pay them for “fees” or “administrative charges” in return for a promised large sum of money which the victim never receives.

Auction and shopping scams are also increasingly common - online auctions can be rigged by scammers or used to target consumers for a scam outside of the auction site.

Spyware and key loggers are a type of software that spies on what you do on your computer. Key-loggers record what keys you press on your keyboard. Scammers can use them to steal online banking passwords or other personal information.

One of the best ways to tackle online fraud, and any type of fraud, is to raise the awareness of consumers and businesses to show them how they can protect themselves. The ACCC’s SCAMwatch website contains detailed information about how consumers can protect themselves from online and other types of scams. Visit **www.scamwatch.gov.au** or call **1300 795 995** to find out more about scams or report a scam

Anyone can be the target of a scam. Remember, **scams target you, protect yourself.**