Twitter Thread by Daniel Cuthbert



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scams are pretty easy to spot and often follow a tried and tested methodology.

A short thread on how you can spot them and not be caught out.

First up, if it sounds too good to be true, it generally is.

This scam is huge on @eBay and sadly happens more frequently than you'd think. Here are some telltale signs:

#1 The price is too good, very random in nature, and doesn't reflect market pricing. This is to draw you in

#2 The seller's account may have a lot of feedback, but what I'm seeing is account takeover being used. This is often where someone's details have been breached elsewhere and the scammers take over accounts. Just checking feedback no longer works.

#3 The location is vague. In this case, UK. Well this island is still pretty big, most sellers don't do this

#4 Very few photos, rarely with any identifying marks such as license plate, etc. This is important as they often lift the photos from Google images and other auction sites.

#5 The text is also vague, often they plant the idea that they are some agency selling for a client, or selling for a cousin/mother/brother who has never seen the Internet before.

now what they want to do is get you off eBay and onto a platform where they can control you more, such as Gmail. The accounts are random in naming structure and also want you to include the item title, as they are running a huge scam here and can't project manage.

So what do the emails look like? I decided to play...

They responded in 48 hours, which is slightly unusual as most selling stuff is pretty quick. This is a good indication that they are popular and have a lot of emails to reply to

Now it gets fun. The price has dropped a lot, and there's a last asking price, but I never even asked that. Oh, also it's located in a really remote location. They choose this to put you off as rarely will the mark be located near there. Using Google Streetview, it doesn't match

I ask for their number. This throws them as they often don't have access to a mobile phone for the scam and in comes the next social engineering attempt

So they now want to use an amazing escrow service, like eBays, called https://t.co/NAjNexp58o

They aren't located in the UK but in Spain, so you can't view it

Delivery is included and they offer a money-back guarantee!! oh and people are interested so act quickly now.

Now this email would be the one to normally tip you off. They are not in the UK but the car is at his wife's house but you can't view it?

That alone is enough to tell you that these people need to go forth and multiply.

Knowing how they operate, I left it a few hours as this usually makes them nervous as they've "hooked" me but I've not taken the bait, so they hammer the point home with one final email

They now want lots of Personally Identifiable Information (PII) and I think this is to either harvest other data from breach reports or to make this more legitimate.

What's sad is that this scam is popular and it works and works well. @eBay isn't doing enough here to stop this

What I'd like to see from a global giant such as @eBay is:

1: Better account security. It's clear accounts are being taken over and previously "good" accounts used to continue the scam.

2: Use of OCR to detect when sellers are trying such a blatant scam. Mr Harry here is selling a huge amount of cars, all from different locations it seems, all with the same MO

3: Account analytics. When an account that may be sold fluffy toys for decades all of a sudden starts selling hundreds of cars, it could be dodgy (it might not be but look into it)

Scammers need to die, end of but it's also up to us to share how these scams work with those who might not be aware and pressure tech firms to get better.

Hope this helps someone out there? #scammers #fraud

Finally, @eBay you use privacy as a response to why you wont inform users when they've reported a proposed fraudulent advert but i feel this is more of you protecting yourself here.

The less the public know that eBay has a fraudulent advert problem, with you admitting it, the more you keep confidence in the platform.

You can do better