Subject: CIS Security Alert: Surge in phishing and other email scams 3/27/2019

CIS Information Security has observed a recent increase in targeted email-based scams and phishing emails, both at CUNY campuses and at the Central Office. Please review the following information to reinforce your awareness of such scams and what you should and should not do in response.

Security Threat Identification / Symptoms

Unsolicited email, sometimes appearing to have been sent by a familiar sender, including CUNY presidents, deans, department heads, etc. Some messages have included a signature block with the name and email address of a real CUNY staff member in a financial or human resources role.

The message may

- contain an unadorned link that leads to a site that attempts to infect malware
- contain an attachment that is claimed to be an invoice or similar
- request the purchase of gift cards on the requestor's behalf
- offer employment as a "secret shopper"
- request a change of direct deposit bank information, targeting human resources and finance staff
- plead for urgent or immediate action

Examples of such messages are included at the end of this message.

Recommended User Action

- DO NOT reply to email with any personal information or passwords. If you have reason to believe that a request is real, call the individual or company directly by independently looking up contact information.
- DO NOT click a link or open an attachment in an unsolicited email message. If you have reason to believe a request is real, type the web address for the company or institution directly into your web browser.
- BE SUSPICIOUS of any message requesting urgent action, particularly when the message appears to be sent by a VIP.
- DO NOT use the same password for your work account, bank, Facebook, etc. In the event you do fall victim to a phishing attempt, perpetrators attempt to use your compromised password to access many online services.
- DO verify that the message sender address is a CUNY (cuny.edu) address. Be wary of non-CUNY addresses crafted to mislead, such as "dean.cuny.edu@gmail.com".
- DO be particularly cautious when reading email on a mobile device. It may be easier to miss telltale signs of phishing attempts when reading email on a smaller screen.
- DO remember that official communications should not solicit personal information by email.
- DO read the CUNY Phishing Advisory posted at security.cuny.edu under CUNY Issued Security Advisories.

- DO change ALL of your passwords if you suspect any account you have access to may be compromised.
- DO complete the 30 minute information security awareness training located at security.cuny.edu.

Annotated scam message examples are found below.

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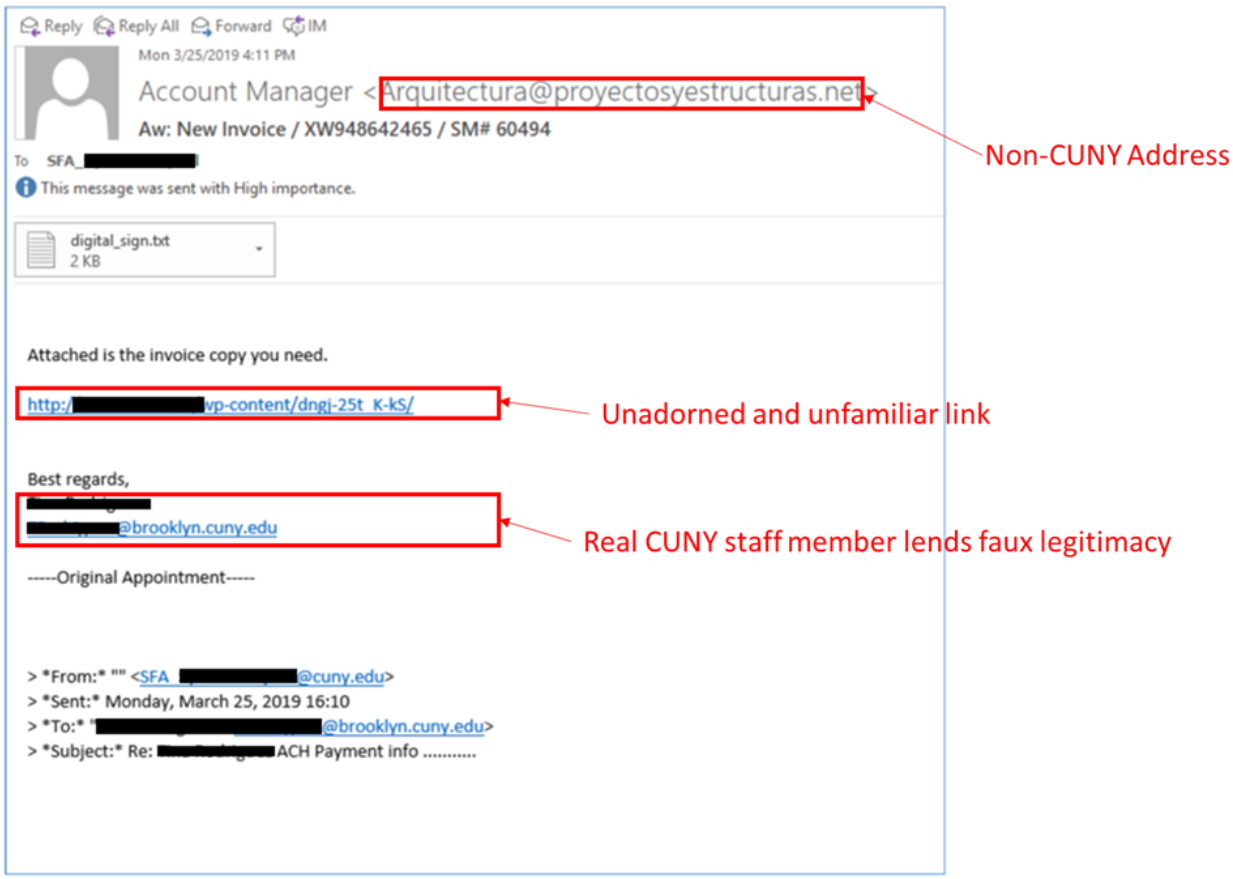
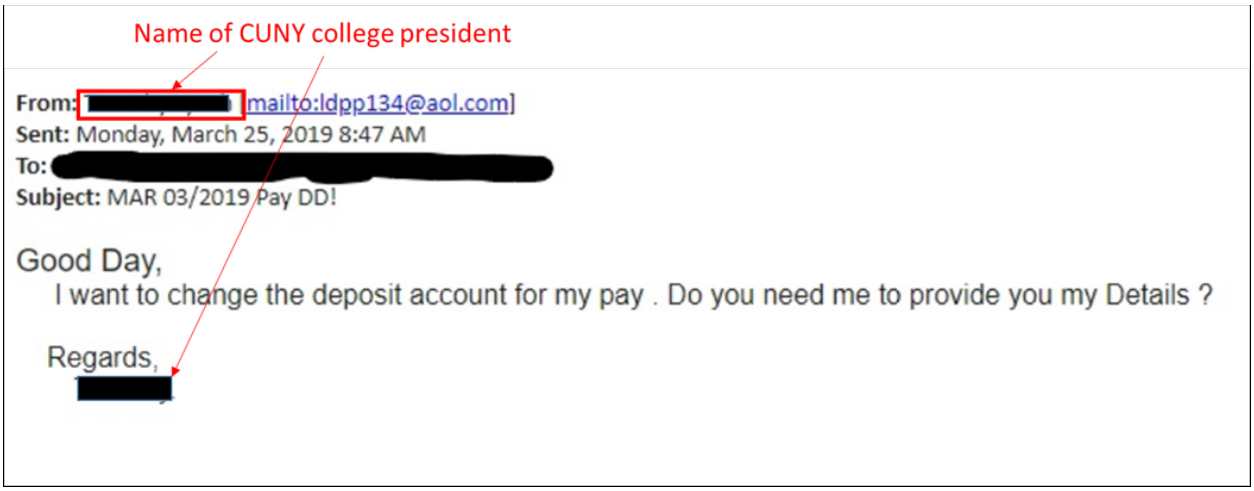
Example of a message intended to infect finance staff computers with banking malware if the link is clicked. Message signs off with contact information for a real CUNY staff member:



Example of direct deposit manipulation attempt of a CUNY college president.



Example of a "secret shopper" fake job offer: