UCI University of California, Irvine

Dear colleagues:

UCI continues to be plagued by “phishing” emails sent by attackers hoping to get individuals to perform some type of action such as clicking on a malicious link, opening a malicious attachment, or sharing sensitive information. Tax season in particular brings a rise in fraudulent emails purporting to be from the IRS or other authorities, targeting personal tax information, wire transfers, electronic funds transfers (EFTs), etc. These emails ask individuals to send copies of W-2s and other sensitive financial information via email, resulting in the theft of personal information.

Phishing emails can lead to loss of research and sensitive data, identify theft, financial damage and more. Phishing emails are now commonplace and it is important for us to know how to protect ourselves against them.

Common red flags to look out for include:

- **Suspicious email address** – a majority of phishing emails can be spotted by looking at the sender’s email address. If the sender address looks suspicious, it is recommended to verify if the email is legitimate.
- **Generic message** – most of the time attackers don’t have internal information, so their messages are very generic.
- **Sense of urgency** – attackers like to take advantage of our emotions and often times creates a sense of urgency to get us to respond.
- **Non-routine business requests** – attackers are not familiar with our internal business processes. Often times they ask us to perform non-routine requests.
- **Misspelling, typos, unfamiliar languages** – most phishing emails are not written very well and can contain grammatical errors.

Please forward any suspicious emails that you want checked to OIT Security at spam@uci.edu.

Additional phishing awareness resources are also available on the OIT Security website.

Please email OIT Security at security@uci.edu with questions.

Sincerely,

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