



Privacy Invasion and Fraud Alert

By Robert Ing, DSc, FAPSc, CPO

While there are many sophisticated Internet scams out there to steal or verify your already compromised information, many fraudsters have returned back to an old school, low tech method that catches most people off guard. It works on the naturally human concept of wanting to be helpful. Here's how it plays out.

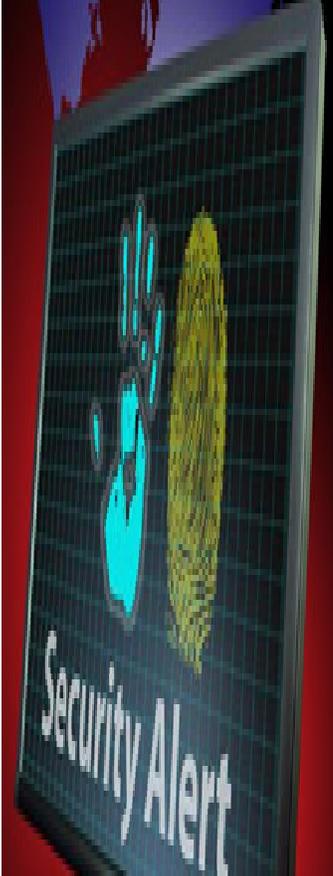
The perpetrator will obtain some very basic information on the person they want to target. This basic information can be an old address or telephone number from as far back as ten years, but with the twist that they have current contact information for the target's employer, trade association, club, friends, family, former partner or past/current clients. The goal of the perpetrator is to obtain a current residence address of the target so it may be used to an unscrupulous end including any activity from garnering further information on the target to stalking the target and their family.

The perpetrator will call any of the current contacts they have for their target under the guise of having a parcel or package delivery for their target. To legitimize the call, they will identify themselves as a courier company but generally use a generic term for the name of their alleged courier company such as, "Parcel Express," "Package Express," "Delivery Services," "Postal Services," etc. In rare cases they may misrepresent themselves as a big name national or international courier that may sound familiar. Once identified, the perpetrator will attempt to add further legitimacy to the call by referring to an old address or telephone number that belonged to their target and state this was the address on the item, but they failed to deliver it, and are seeking assistance with obtaining an updated address or telephone number. When usually asked how they obtained the telephone number they are calling, the perpetrator will say they don't know who noted this number but it was written on a waybill or penciled on the package as a contact telephone number; which in reality makes no sense if one considers how old the address is on the package and how one would realistically obtain this current contact number.

To add a psychological element of being non-threatening, these calls are typically made by a young to middle-aged female operator, who takes on the persona of just some woman in the community doing her job; a hockey mom with kids or simply the nice lady you would confide in. Furthermore, while telephone calls such as these occur throughout the year, they are especially prevalent during the holiday season and their target's birthday.

Dr. Robert Ing is a forensic scientist, broadcaster and author. An internationally acclaimed forensic intelligence specialist, he has traveled the world on behalf of the interests of governments and major corporations. Dr. Ing has appeared on major North American broadcast news networks on the issues of forensic intelligence, espionage risk management, privacy, identity theft, electronic surveillance and Internet crime.

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However, do not let your guard down, as these people are a very organized group and will even legitimately obtain a toll-free 1-800, 1-888 or 1-877 telephone number that will be displayed on your call display and will be used as a call back number in order to further legitimize their position to an unsuspecting victim. Anyone may obtain a toll-free number from private service providers on the Internet for a mobile telephone or voice mail system, so this should not be considered a “proof” of legitimacy.

The bottom line here is, if someone calls you with an alleged delivery for a friend or family member, and especially if they try to obtain current address or telephone information; politely decline and ask for detailed information so they may be called back. Then you may pass this onto your family member or friend for confirmation, or pass it onto local law enforcement if it looks suspicious. In any case, never give any information to anyone you do not know or to a company you are not expecting to do business with or receive a delivery from.

The people who would invade your privacy, commit fraud against and even stalk you, your children, your family and friends are organized - this is how they profit and get away with what they do. Do not let them get away with it. Please share this article.

About the Author

Dr. Robert Ing is a forensic intelligence specialist and has appeared on North American news networks on the issues of technology crime, computer security, privacy and identity theft.

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