

FRAUD ALERT

Facebook “Stranded Overseas” Scam Targets St. Louis Area

Recently, this office has received several complaints about a Facebook scam operating in the St. Louis area. The scheme typically begins when a Facebook or other social networking account is “hijacked” and the owner is blocked from accessing their account. The hijacker then sends messages to all of the account owner’s friends and contacts. The message claims that the account owner was robbed while traveling overseas and lost all of their money, luggage and identification. The message then begs the recipient to wire transfer money in order to help with hotel and travel bills.

The message often states that because the “lost traveler” is busy obtaining a new passport at the US Consulate, the recipient should contact a hotel concierge or bank manager at a certain international phone number to arrange to send the money. The person who answers this phone when the “lost traveler’s” friends call is actually working with the account hijacker and proceeds to collect all of the wire transferred money. Due to the fact that the account owner is blocked from accessing his/her account by the hijacker, he or she often has no idea the scam is occurring .

If you receive such a message:

- ◆ Do not send money. Make every attempt to contact your friend by telephone to determine if they travelled out of the country and are in genuine need.
- ◆ If you have been telephoned by someone claiming to be your friend, make certain you are actually speaking to your friend. Ask questions about information that only your friend and you would know.

If you suddenly find yourself blocked from your social networking account:

- ◆ Immediately contact the site to determine how to reestablish your account and to make sure that it has not been hijacked.
- ◆ Call your friends/contacts on the site to see if they have received any messages about you.
- ◆ Contact the Fraud Assistance Hotline (314-612-1412) as it is possible your identity has also been stolen.



*To Pursue Justice For All Citizens Within The Highest
Standards Of Ethical Behavior And Professionalism*

For Additional Information:

Fraud Assistance Hotline: (314) 612-1412

Office Phone: (314) 622-4941