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Scam expert shares how to not end up on scammers 'sucker list'



Scammers are out in full force during the holidays, and they don't discriminate their targets.

Posted: Nov 25, 2019 6:50 AM
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Posted By: Isabella Caruso 

TIPPECANOE COUNTY, Ind. (WLFI) — The holidays are a wonderful, but busy time of the year. Unfortunately, that's why it's the perfect time for scammers to attack.

News 18 spoke with Marian Liu, an Assistant Professor at Purdue University. Liu researches all types of scams.

Liu said in the midst of the busy holiday season it's easy to be tricked by scammers.

Her biggest piece of advice is to pay attention to the emails and calls coming in. If you purchase several items from a big retailer such as Amazon, you may receive an email from what appears to be Amazon. Liu said customers should be careful of this because many scammers disguise as retailers and companies to get your information.

The email may say something such as, "There's been a delay with your order. Please reply with your username and password." Liu said never to reply to a message like this.

She explained retailers never ask for personal information in an email, or over the phone, without the customer verifying their identity first.

11/28/2019Scam expert shares how to not end up on scammers 'sucker list'

She said while she believes scammers target elderly people more often, these types of messages are sent to everyone. Scammers are out in full force during the holidays, and they don't discriminate their targets.

Liu explained for the scammer, its all about the first interaction with the victim.

If you do reply to an email or pick up the phone for an unknown number, you become even more of a target.

"Once you have that first step initiated, the scammers have an arsenal of weapons in their pocket."

One of those weapons is communication. If you fall victim to one scam, the scammers know how and when to target you to fall for others.

Liu said scammers have what she called 'sucker lists.'

If you are tricked by a scammer, that scammer will sell your contact information to others. They also know what type of scam you fall victim to, so they use that information to target you again and again.

Liu used the example of charities, which is especially relevant during the holiday season because it is a time when so many people give.

For example, if you often donate to a certain charity scammers will pretend to be from an organization with a similar mission.

"Let's say you're an animal person. Then they would come back with a different organization name continue telling you 'Well we are helping the animals so you should donate to us.'"

Liu said although it sounds cliché, if it sounds too good to be true it probably is. So if there is an unknown sender in your email inbox or an unknown number calling you, do not pick up and do not respond. Not only during the holidays, but year round.

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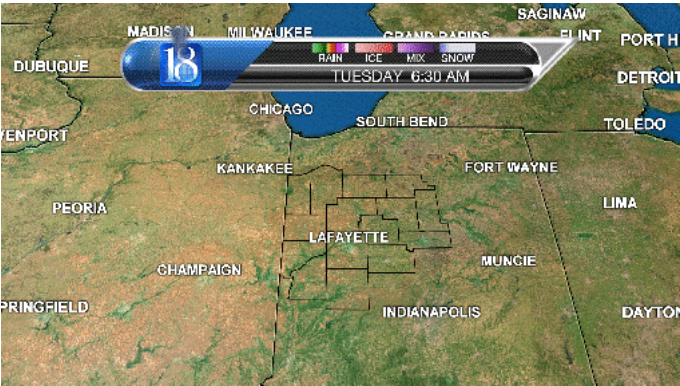
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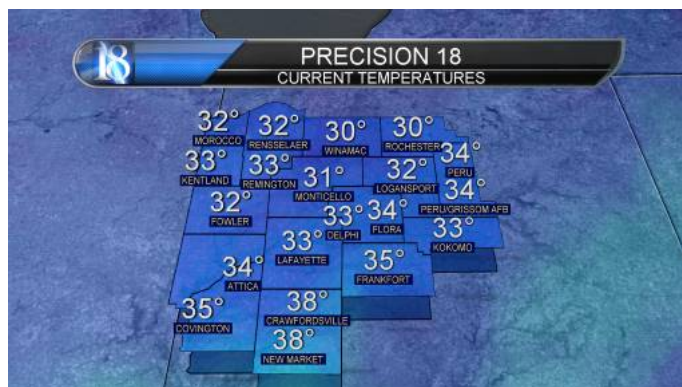
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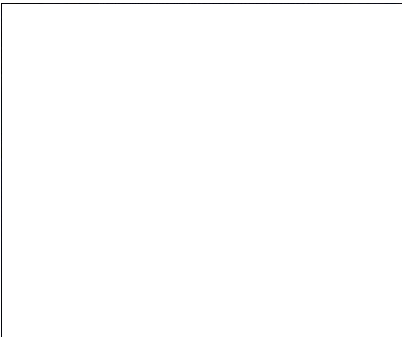
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