Written by James W. Wade III
Monday, 19 November 2012 09:46 -

Entrust®
Securing Digital Identities
& Information

Becareful doing the holiday season

The holiday season presents the perfect opportunity for cybercriminals to steal consumers' information as shopping is increasingly conducted online. According to a 2011 study from comScore, dollars spent by online shoppers on Black Friday increased 26 percent last year and the total amount spent on online purchases during Cyber Monday increased 22 percent. Entrust Inc., a global leader in securing online identities and information, provides consumers the tools necessary to protect their information when shopping online. "Scammers and online phishers see one thing when it comes to the holidays -- more consumers sharing their information online to steal," said Entrust President and CEO Bill Conner. "As consumers have moved to using mobile devices and conducting transactions online, the number of breaches and hacks has increased. Malware that can infect your computer and take your credit card information is easily hidden in fake emails and pop-up ads. However, simple awareness can be one of the biggest obstacles to cybercriminals stealing your information."

Hackers are inventing new ways to infiltrate websites with the intention to do harm, such as taking credit card information and passwords. While stealing a password may not seem that harmful, consumers often use the same password for multiple sites, giving hackers the opportunity to log into a bank or credit card site. The following tips can help consumers guard against online threats.

1. Holiday-Themed Scams: During this time of year, online users see an

   influx of e-Greeting cards, requests for online donations to charities,

pop-ups, fake chat requests, spam emails and online advertisements. If an online user interacts with one of the many clever social engineering techniques, they may expose themselves to viruses or malware. Especially around the holidays, it's a good rule of thumb to stick to websites and online retailers you know and trust.

2. Green and Gold: Online retailers working to create a secure environment for shoppers often deploy advanced EV SSL, which turns most browsers' address bars green to show the website and transaction is secure. EV SSL is the highest level of security on the Web today. Additionally, one of the main security features consumers should always look for is the gold padlock within their browser. Especially during the checkout process or when supplying personal information, shoppers should only proceed if a green address bar or gold padlock is present.
3. Three Secret Digits: Most online retailers will require the three-digit Card Verification Value (CVV or CV2) number from the back of your credit card. If they don't, this could be a red flag and consumers should think twice about completing the purchase.
4. Update Browser and Security Software: Those reminder pop-ups you receive may seem like an annoyance; however, these are sent for a reason. Many browsers and security vendors update the technology based on specific malware and/or viruses, and those updates are extremely important to guard against those particular threats. The newer browsers also feature more advanced anti-phishing tools (e.g., EV SSL) than older browsers. As

a result, it is wise to be diligent about regularly updating software.

5. Look for HTTPS: More commonly known as SSL, an https Web address helps ensure Internet transmissions are encrypted and the identity of the organization has been verified. Consumers can verify if a site uses SSL via the "https://" in the address bar instead of the standard "http" format.

About Entrust

A trusted provider of identity-based security solutions, Entrust secures governments, enterprises and financial institutions in more than 5,000 organizations spanning 85 countries. Entrust's award-winning software authentication platforms manage today's most secure identity credentials, addressing customer pain points for cloud and mobile security, physical and logical access, citizen eID initiatives, certificate management and SSL. For more information about Entrust products and services, call 888-690-2424, email entrust@entrust.com or visit www.entrust.com.

Entrust is a registered trademark of Entrust, Inc. in the United States and certain other countries. In Canada, Entrust is a registered trademark of Entrust Limited. All Entrust product names are trademarks or registered trademarks of Entrust, Inc. or Entrust Limited. All other company and product names are trademarks or registered trademarks of their respective owners.