



SA-20-2009

January 15, 2009

SPECIAL ALERT

TO: CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER

SUBJECT: Fedwire Phishing Scheme

Summary: *Fraudulent e-mails claiming to be from the Federal Reserve Bank that warn of a phishing attack on the Fedwire system are reportedly in circulation.*

The Federal Deposit Insurance Corporation (FDIC) is warning consumers, businesses and financial institutions to be aware of fraudulent e-mails allegedly from the Federal Reserve Bank. The fraudulent e-mails claim that a phishing attack has affected the Fedwire system and that restrictions are in place. The e-mails further instruct recipients to click on links within the e-mail for additional information.

The fraudulent e-mails have included various spoofed names and addresses in the "From:" line of the messages, including "Bank System Administration," "System Administration" and "Federal Reserve Bank." The e-mails contain the following message verbatim:

FEDERAL RESERVE BANK

Important:

You're getting this letter in connection with new directives issued by U.S. Treasury Department. The directives concern U.S. Federal Wire online payments.

On On January 1, 2009 a large-scaled phishing attack started and has been still lasting. A great number of banks and credit unions is affected by this attack and quantity of illegal wire transfers has reached an extremely high level.

U.S. Treasury Department, Federal Reserve and Federal Deposit Insurance Corporation (FDIC) in common worked out a complex of immediate actions for the highest possible reduction of fraudulent operations. We regret to inform you that definite restrictions will be applied to all Federal Wire transfers from January 6 till January 16.

Here you can get more detailed information regarding the affected banks and U.S. Treasury Department restrictions:

The message contains links to two Web pages that attempt to load malicious Trojan horse programs onto end users' computers.

Consumers, businesses and financial institutions should be aware that Fedwire operations are not restricted and are operating as normal, and should take the following precautions:

- If an end user received the e-mail and clicked on any of the links, fully scan the computer using updated anti-virus software. If malicious code is detected on the computer, consult with a computer security or anti-virus specialist to remove the malicious code or re-install a clean image of the computer system.
- Be aware that phishing e-mails frequently have links to Web pages that host malicious code and software. Do not follow Web links in unsolicited e-mails from apparent federal banking agencies. Instead, bookmark or type the agency's Web address.
- Always use anti-virus software and ensure that the virus signatures are automatically updated. Ensure that the computer operating systems and common software applications security patches are installed.
- Do not open unsolicited or unexpected e-mail attachments because of the risk of malicious code or software in the attachments. Instead, call the agency using a known and appropriate telephone number to verify the legitimacy of the message and attached file.
- Be alert to different variations of the fraudulent e-mails.

Information about counterfeit items, cyber-fraud incidents and other fraudulent activity may be forwarded to the FDIC's Cyber-Fraud and Financial Crimes Section, 550 17th Street, N.W., Room F-4004, Washington, D.C. 20429, or transmitted electronically to alert@fdic.gov. Questions related to federal deposit insurance or consumer issues should be submitted to the FDIC using an online form that can be accessed at <http://www2.fdic.gov/starsmail/index.asp>.

For your reference, FDIC Special Alerts may be accessed from the FDIC's website at www.fdic.gov/news/news/SpecialAlert/2009/index.html. To learn how to automatically receive FDIC Special Alerts through e-mail, please visit www.fdic.gov/about/subscriptions/index.html.

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Note: Paper copies of FDIC Special Alerts may be obtained through the FDIC's Public Information Center, 1-877-275-3342 or 703-562-2200).

