

Monday, March 23, 2009

Phishing Scammer tries it on with CEO of an Anti-phishing software product "Online Armor"

So, I'm sitting there today working on something for a client when I received an unsolicited Skype Message with an "Important Business Proposal".

I normally mess with these guys a little, just to waste their time, but as I was on the phone to a client I just decided to get rid of him quickly.

As you can see - he was surprisingly honest about his ultimate intentions.

This is how the scam works

Mr Dutu, or Mrs Dutu is usually writing to you from a yahoo or other free email address. It usually doesn't address you by name. It always offers some opportunity - usually, the chance to get a share of millions of dollars in exchange for some assistance.



A common theme is the widow of a Nigerian official (or just a corrupt Nigerian official) wants to move \$250M (usually spelled as TWO HUNDRED AND FIFTY MILLION DOLLARS) out of the country. He or she just needs a partner overseas.

They offer a split of the money. Often there is the chance of further profits (we'd like to invest in real-estate in your country, and we will give you 10% of the profits). Quite often, they thank God for His mercy in finding someone as kind as yourself to help them.

So, you're probably asking yourself - how does this scam work? They want to send you \$250M - it's going to your bank account - what's the catch? This scam has been going on for years, and it's called Advanced Fee Fraud.

Had I accepted this guy's offer, here's what likely would have happened:

- He'd ask me for some ID - passport and bank account details for the

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money

- He's send me some official looking documentation - fake of course - which would allow me to claim the money from some third party. The third party would probably also have a free email address too (like Yahoo or Hotmail).
- The third party (Notary, Bank Manager) would contact me about claiming my money - and here's the catch - there's a \$20 fee for stamping the document. Or a \$200 fee.
- Mr Dutu would claim not to have this money, but of course, since I will soon get 10% of \$250M, \$200 is not much to pay.
- I'd send the money - and the documents would be "stamped".
- Once they'd got me for \$200 - there would be some other issue... and the costs would keep rising and rising until they couldn't get any more money out of me.

It's a sad fact that in tough economic times, people get desperate and take risks or chances that they wouldn't normally take in the hope of the "one big win" that would solve all their problems. You can imagine being in dire straights, and having invested \$2,000 or so , thinking another \$500 can't hurt.

Don't get caught out.

I've told the guy to go and find an idiot. Don't let it be you - seriously - if it looks too good to be true, it probably is. The chance that some corrupt official is going to send you \$250M dollars and let you keep 10% of it is pretty remote to say the least.

Don't be the Idiot: Mr Dutu Returns

It was a Friday afternoon, and about an hour since my chat with "Mr Dutu" - too early to go for a beer, too late to do much work. I could see he was still online.

So I thought I'd ask him a few questions...

[3:56:08 PM] Mike Nash says: Any luck yet ?

[3:56:48 PM] Mr. Robert Dutu says: just 1

[3:56:54 PM] Mr. Robert Dutu says: for over three hours

[3:57:07 PM] Mike Nash says: :(Business getting slow for you?

[3:57:13 PM] Mike Nash says: May I ask, how much you make doing this ?

[3:57:47 PM] Mr. Robert Dutu says: **be my victim and you will get to know how much i can make from you**

[3:58:05 PM] Mike Nash says: (rofl) Very good :)

[3:58:10 PM] Mike Nash says: You're a funny guy

[3:58:20 PM] Mr. Robert Dutu says: thanks (handshake)

I ended up chatting with him for about an hour - and I have to say, he was a funny guy. A criminal, sure - but he claimed he was from Ghana, and had been doing this for only three months. He even tried to get some money out of me - but despite how amusing the guy was, he's still a criminal, and relies on trickery and social engineering to get what he wants - which is cash.

[3:58:51 PM] Mike Nash says: Seriously, do you really find many people that fall for this scam still? Though, I read in the newspaper than something like \$100M leave the country each year

[3:59:23 PM] Mr. Robert Dutu says: what scam?

[3:59:31 PM] Mr. Robert Dutu says: this is real

[3:59:34 PM] Mike Nash says: The advance fee fraud

[3:59:42 PM] Mr. Robert Dutu says: i will send you details on it

[4:00:11 PM] Mike Nash says: Over Skype?

[4:00:23 PM] Mr. Robert Dutu says: This message has been removed

***Note - he pasted here the generic phishing email - which described how we'd share \$16M. It was really, really well written in comparison to those that I'd normally get. ***

[4:01:11 PM] Mike Nash says: Nice. That's actually quite well written. And instead of \$250M , you're saying \$16M...

[4:01:29 PM] Mike Nash says: So, what's the next step?

[4:02:20 PM] Mike Nash says: Actually, I work for a security ecompany - this is

why I am so interested

[4:02:22 PM] Mr. Robert Dutu says: wait, i have a client
 [4:02:25 PM] Mr. Robert Dutu says: he is discussing positive
 [4:02:26 PM] Mike Nash says: ok

It was interesting the way he referred to his victims as clients. He offered me the chance to see the chat history with his "client" - but then it went a little bad...

[4:04:29 PM] Mr. Robert Dutu says: and put it on the internet right?
 [4:04:36 PM] Mr. Robert Dutu says: no
 [4:04:44 PM] Mr. Robert Dutu says: you will spoil my job
 [4:04:54 PM] Mike Nash says: Not a chance!
 [4:05:01 PM] Mike Nash says: There's already lots of articles about it
 [4:05:14 PM] Mike Nash says: and I bet, you do not use this account for more than some days at a time, right ?
 [4:05:22 PM] Mike Nash says: Next time it will be some other name
 [4:06:08 PM] Mr. Robert Dutu says: why all this question
 [4:06:16 PM] Mr. Robert Dutu says: do you want to join?
 [4:06:25 PM] Mike Nash says: No, I don't :)

[4:06:34 PM] Mr. Robert Dutu says: good
 [4:06:48 PM] Mr. Robert Dutu says: what is your job?
 [4:06:51 PM] Mike Nash says: I think I could improve the text of your letter a bit - but it is better than 99% of the ones I receive normally
 [4:07:05 PM] Mike Nash says: I work in security industry, we write a personal firewall product
 [4:07:20 PM] Mike Nash says: it also detects things like keyloggers
 [4:07:37 PM] Mr. Robert Dutu says: very good
 [4:07:45 PM] Mr. Robert Dutu says: what is your pay?

I made up a number, and told him, and then added:

[4:09:12 PM] Mike Nash says: what's yours?

He was very very evasive about how much he earned, until he told me that he'd only ever made EUR50 from a woman in the Philippines. Of course, he could be sitting there in a \$5000 chair in his private compound saying that for all I know.

[4:09:56 PM] Mr. Robert Dutu says: sorry for my late reply
 [4:10:00 PM] Mr. Robert Dutu says: was busy with a client
 [4:10:07 PM] Mr. Robert Dutu says: you earn alot of money

[4:10:09 PM] Mike Nash says: I like the way you call them clients
 [4:10:21 PM] Mike Nash says: It implies a certain professionalism
 [4:10:26 PM] Mr. Robert Dutu says: thanks

[4:10:35 PM] Mike Nash says: Cost of living here is higher.
 [4:10:47 PM] Mr. Robert Dutu says: if i ask you to send me some money will you?

[4:11:20 PM] Mike Nash says: What would I receive in exchange for a payment?
 [4:13:17 PM] Mr. Robert Dutu says: am back
 [4:13:24 PM] Mr. Robert Dutu says: that is the point
 [4:13:34 PM] Mr. Robert Dutu says: nobody wants to give anything out for free
 [4:14:21 PM] Mr. Robert Dutu says: **but if i promise you \$16million usd i will end up getting more than your pay from you**
 [4:14:40 PM] Mr. Robert Dutu says: **you might even go to the extent of taking loan for me**
 [4:14:54 PM] Mr. Robert Dutu says: which is very improper

This is actually quite sad. I've read stories in the paper of this - but never seen the scammers side of it before. He drifted off into trying to get a bit of sympathy from me, and then started to ask me for money...

[4:34:37 PM] Mr. Robert Dutu says: can you be of any assistance?
 [4:34:39 PM] Mike Nash says: It's a Friday - everyone thinks of the weekend, and the pub
 [4:34:41 PM] Mike Nash says: wrong time of day

[4:34:46 PM] Mike Nash says: No, I can't really help you
 [4:34:52 PM] Mike Nash says: you're committing a crime
 [4:35:03 PM] Mr. Robert Dutu says: i know
 [4:35:11 PM] Mr. Robert Dutu says: and i accept the fact that i am GUILTY

[4:35:32 PM] Mike Nash says: But you still won't tell me how much you make :)
 I'll bet your computer is more powerful than mine
 [4:35:41 PM] Mr. Robert Dutu says: and will not hesitate to be prosecuted when the law catch up with me
 [4:36:17 PM] Mr. Robert Dutu says: there is no specific amount
 [4:36:33 PM] Mr. Robert Dutu says: i take whatever you can give me
 [4:36:58 PM] Mr. Robert Dutu says: even if is 100 or 50 \$
 [4:37:04 PM] Mr. Robert Dutu says: i will seriously appreciate it
 [4:38:06 PM] Mr. Robert Dutu says: and i know my God will forgive because i pray to him to replenish the pockets of my clients with double of whatever they loss

At this point, he went all religion on me and talked about washing his sins and so on. Then back to business:

[4:44:16 PM] Mr. Robert Dutu says: i take whatever you can give me
 [4:44:23 PM] Mr. Robert Dutu says: even if is 100 or 50 \$
 [4:44:33 PM] Mr. Robert Dutu says: or more
 [4:44:35 PM] Mr. Robert Dutu says: i will seriously appreciate it
 [4:45:27 PM] Mike Nash says: I'll bet you will
 [4:45:38 PM] Mike Nash says: I have this image in my head, of you in the bar after with all your friends
 [4:45:52 PM] Mike Nash says: "This guy thought he was clever, but I still got him to send me \$100. Who wants a cigar?"

[4:46:52 PM] Mr. Robert Dutu says: (rofl)
 [4:46:56 PM] Mr. Robert Dutu says: very funny
 [4:47:01 PM] Mr. Robert Dutu says: i don't smoke
 [4:47:10 PM] Mr. Robert Dutu says: i only drink occasionally

More talking about money, and then:

[4:49:31 PM] Mr. Robert Dutu says: i know at the end of this conversation you will publish our chat
 [4:49:40 PM] Mr. Robert Dutu says: but that is not a problem
 [4:49:46 PM] Mr. Robert Dutu says: i am still very sincere
 [4:49:55 PM] Mike Nash says: Actually, I published already just the funny part
 [4:51:53 PM] Mr. Robert Dutu says: why?
 [4:52:15 PM] Mike Nash says: because usually, if I say something like that, they do not reply and move to next victim. It was different
 [4:52:33 PM] Mike Nash says: It is like a policeman warning a car thief to drive carefully
 [4:52:46 PM] Mr. Robert Dutu says: ahahahahaha

It was getting late, and I was ready to go home... this is where he came up with his classic:

[4:54:17 PM] Mr. Robert Dutu says: how do i get you to send me some money?
 [4:54:40 PM] Mike Nash says: Unfortunately, you will not get me to send you money.

[4:54:58 PM] Mr. Robert Dutu says: don't be stingy my friend
 [4:55:20 PM] Mr. Robert Dutu says: it will not cost you anything to send some money to a stranger who is in need

[4:55:41 PM] Mike Nash says: You probably make more money than me. Will you send me some?
 [4:56:18 PM] Mr. Robert Dutu says: **yes \$16million usd but we will have to finance the transfer together**
 [4:56:27 PM] Mike Nash says: HAHAHAHAHAHAHAAAAHA!
 [4:56:39 PM] Mr. Robert Dutu says: yes
 [4:56:44 PM] Mike Nash says: Touche!
 [4:56:51 PM] Mr. Robert Dutu says: and we share it at the end 50% each
 [4:57:12 PM] Mr. Robert Dutu says: \$8million usd for you
 [4:57:31 PM] Mr. Robert Dutu says: this is a life time opportunity

[4:57:33 PM] Mike Nash says: You know, if you ever give up the scam business, you'd have a great career in comedy
 [4:57:53 PM] Mr. Robert Dutu says: if i were you i will grab opportunities like this with both hands
 [4:58:02 PM] Mr. Robert Dutu says: and become rich overnight
 [4:58:28 PM] Mike Nash says: but we already know it is a scam, and you hate to do it

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[4:58:30 PM] Mr. Robert Dutu says: look my friend am not a scammer
[4:58:32 PM] Mike Nash says: I havent been drinking
[4:58:42 PM] Mike Nash says: so I am not likely to change my mind
[4:58:55 PM] Mr. Robert Dutu says: ;(

Unfortunately, after this gem he pretty much went back to trying to phish me with the \$16 million. A shame. I really enjoyed the chat with him (some parts have been edited out for length) - and at some point when he was telling me about life over there (wherever there actually was) I felt sorry for him - he was very, very good at his job and had a good sense of humour about him.

Mike

Posted by Mike Nash at [10:36 AM](#) 

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