

Cloudmark warns of increased 'phishing'

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Cloudmark Inc. issued a consumer warning Wednesday in anticipation of an increased risk of "phishing attacks" following the holiday shopping season.

Also, the danger of identification theft is increased preceding the public's typical New Year resolve of "getting out of debt," the company warned in a statement.

Jordan Ritter, co-founder and chief technology officer of Cloudmark, said, "Every year during the holidays, a high percentage of consumers find themselves spending a little more than anticipated, and then begin to panic as the last bit of gift wrap is recycled. A phishing offer from a criminal element posing as your bank and offering to consolidate your credit card debt under one easy, low-rate card might be especially tempting now, but be cautious. Any e-mail that leads you to a site and asks you to enter all of your credit card data could put you at extreme risk."

He added, "It is important to become educated on the topic, and understand the difference between spam and phishing. Spam is essentially marketing, annoying to be sure, but not usually high risk, though we have seen some shifts in that area. Phishing, however, is an all-out criminal activity. Attacks are highly targeted, generally short-lived and harder to track down. Phishers just want to get your information and clean out your bank account."

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