

# **New phish twist directs Craigslist users to fake eBay site**

March 11 2010, By Katelyn Ferral

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A new phishing scam is using the classified advertising Web site Craigslist to lure potential buyers to a fake version of the online auction site eBay.

Mike Boerschinger, a certified eBay seller and owner of Sell It Now in Waukesha, Wis., the state's largest eBay consignment store, said a growing number of his customers have been solicited or scammed by phony eBay and Craigslist sellers.

The scam works like this: A potential buyer sees an ad for an item on Craigslist. The Craigslist ad send them to a link to the same product that the seller is offering on a site that appears to be eBay. The fake eBay site prompts the buyer to enter their user name and eBay password information.

Once a fraudulent site captures an individual's eBay ID and password, Boerschinger said, the scammer can use the victim's eBay ID to sell other fake items from that account. Many customers use the same password for their eBay and PayPal -- and even online banking accounts -- leaving consumers even more vulnerable to theft, Boerschinger said.

"This is so multifaceted, this isn't just one scam, this is 15 scams," he said.

While consumer protection groups have long warned against online scams and the risks involved with wiring money via Western Union,

Boerschinger said more customers are being deceived.

"You think, well maybe they're not educated ... (but) you'd be shocked how many people fall for this," Boerschinger said. "I've almost been fooled on a number of occasions," despite a background in information technology.

Duffy Nagel, owner of Nagel Autobody in Waukesha, encountered an online scam after he lost a bid for an item on eBay. After he lost the bid, Nagel said, he received four e-mails from four different sellers offering to sell him the same product before it was put back up on eBay.

"It was the same type of scam these people were trying," Nagel said. "It just gets you so mad. I knew, obviously, because I got four of them ... they were fake."

Nagel said he was taken by a different e-mail scam that used PayPal to get consumer user names and passwords. Nagel received an e-mail from what appeared to be PayPal shortly after he used the site to purchase an item online. The e-mail said there was a problem with his account and prompted Nagel to send his account information to get the problem fixed.

"(It) asked if I could give them my password and, like a dummy, I did," Nagel said.

Nagel went to Sell It Now and changed his account information. But others have lost money through the scam, he said.

Even sellers who appear legitimate by corresponding with buyers and offering documentation of the product being sold can turn out to be [scammers](#).

Jeff Tiedke, a teacher at Oak Creek High School and an eBay user since 1998, said his uncle lost \$18,000 through a Craigslist scam when he tried to buy a Harley-Davidson motorcycle from out-of-state. The price for the discounted Harley was reasonable, Tiedke said, and the seller's convincing knowledge of the product made the deal seem believable.

"The man gave him additional photos, had contact via e-mail; everything seemed on the up-and-up," Tiedke said.

His uncle was going to have the motorcycle shipped back to Wisconsin and, in order to do that, the seller requested payment in full via Western Union. Tiedke's uncle wired the full amount and never received the Harley.

"He was so embarrassed that he never told anybody, never said a word and never went to the authorities," Tiedke said.

Janet Jenkins, an administrator in the division of trade and consumer protection in the state Department of Agriculture, said the number of complaints for online fraud has not increased. But, she added, more fraud cases occur than are reported.

"For every person that complains, 10 people don't," Jenkins said. "It depends on how much money is involved."

Susan Bach, director of communications for the Better Business Bureau of Wisconsin, said the agency rates Craigslist an "F" on a scale from A+ to F.

"Anecdotally, we hear that a lot of people are scammed on Craigslist," Bach said. She said the reason for the F rating is the amount of unresolved Better Business Bureau complaints. A review turned up 52 complaints against Craigslist.

Craigslist did not return requests for comment.

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## **PROTECT YOURSELF**

Rules to help avoid getting ripped off:

- Never wire funds via Western Union, MoneyGram or any other wire service. Anyone who asks you to do so is a scammer.
- Fake cashier checks and money orders are common, and banks will cash them and hold you responsible when the fake is discovered weeks later.
- Deal locally with people you can meet in person. Follow this one simple rule and you will avoid 99 percent of the scam attempts on Craigslist. Alternatively, have someone look at the item before purchasing outside of the area.
- [Craigslist](#) is not involved in any transaction and does not handle payments, guarantee transactions, provide escrow services, or offer "buyer protection" or "seller certification"
- Never give out financial information, such as a bank account number, Social Security number, eBay or PayPal information.
- Avoid deals involving shipping or escrow services and know that only a scammer will "guarantee" your transaction.
- Ask questions. If you're buying something expensive, like an automobile, and the seller gives you some long story that involves leaving the country, it's probably a fraud.

- Change your passwords. Do not use the same passwords on your eBay, PayPal and other accounts. Make sure you change your passwords every month. This will also help keep scammers and hijackers away.
- Watch out for phishing e-mails.
- The e-mail may inform you that there is a problem with your account/password. There may be a link to click inside. [eBay](#), [PayPal](#) or your bank will never ask you for your e-mail password.

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