

# Nigerian man charged in US school districts phishing scam

August 4 2017

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A Nigerian citizen has been arrested in a phishing scheme that targeted school districts in Connecticut and Minnesota in an effort to get employees' personal information and file bogus tax returns, federal authorities said Friday.

Daniel Adekunle Ojo was arrested Thursday on fraud and identity theft charges at his home in Durham, North Carolina, according to an announcement by Connecticut U.S. Attorney Deirdre Daly. A federal magistrate judge ordered him detained and transferred to Connecticut.

Prosecutors said a school district employee in Glastonbury, Connecticut, received an [email](#) in February that appeared to be sent by another employee, who asked for tax information for 1,600 school district workers. The worker who received the email then forwarded the information, which was used in the scheme to file 122 bogus tax returns seeking nearly \$600,000 in refunds, authorities said.

Officials said the Internal Revenue Service processed about six of the fake returns and electronically deposited nearly \$37,000 in refunds to various bank accounts.

Investigators linked the email sent to the employee to Ojo, prosecutors said.

Officials also believe Ojo was involved in similar email schemes targeting [school districts](#) in Groton, Connecticut, and Bloomington,

Minnesota.

In March, a Groton school [employee](#) emailed tax information of 1,300 employees in response to an email that appeared to be from the superintendent of schools. Authorities said the information was used to file about 66 fraudulent tax returns seeking about \$364,000 in refunds. Officials said the fake returns weren't processed because they had been flagged as being part of an identity theft scheme after school employees discovered the problem.

Prosecutors also said they linked the email account used by Ojo to a similar scam that obtained [tax information](#) for about 2,800 [school](#) employees in Bloomington earlier this year.

Eric Placke, a federal public defender in North Carolina who represented Ojo only for his initial court appearance, declined to comment Friday. It's not clear who Ojo's attorney will be in Connecticut.

Authorities said Ojo entered the U.S. in May 2016 on a visitor's visa and failed to leave on his scheduled departure date in June 2016.

Daly urged the public to double-check links and email addresses before clicking on and responding to them, to avoid becoming an identity theft victim.

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Citation: Nigerian man charged in US school districts phishing scam (2017, August 4) retrieved 29 April 2024 from <https://phys.org/news/2017-08-nigerian-school-districts-phishing-scam.html>

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