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An honest scammer: An insider Chat with Nigeria Connection!

The Nigeria Connection is still earning millions each year with a very simple email scam: Users all over the world are asked to help smuggle huge sums of money out of Africa via their bank accounts in return for large commissions. Anyone taking up this offer ends up poorer and not richer for the experience. Mike Nash, boss of the Australian security company Tall Emu, had a surprisingly open Chat session with the Nigeria Connection.

Salzburg/Sydney, March 2009 – The Tall Emu Company is based in Australia. Mike Nash markets the Online Armor Personal Firewall, a very successful and versatile piece of software that prevents hackers from secretly accessing the user's computer. As a result of this, Mike Nash is very sensitized to all issues relating to computer security. He was therefore appropriately amazed as he suddenly received a Skype message informing him of an "Important business opportunity".

Before we publish the Chat log you should know the following: the sender was a member of the so-called Nigeria Connection. These "Scammers" (swindlers) work from Africa, usually in Nigeria. They send emails in English or poorly written German. The story is always basically the same. Somehow, they have accumulated several million dollars in a bank account somewhere in Africa and now wish to secretly transfer this money out of Africa. The mail recipient must make their bank account available for this transaction and in return will supposedly receive 25 percent of the sum as commission. Those who are overwhelmed by greed and do not think twice about the national money laundering laws are constantly asked for more and more money to pay for bribes and other "fees". Although the tricks of the Nigeria Connection are already well-known, many people still seem to be falling for this scam. Mike Nash is not one of them, as you can read in the following Chat excerpt.

Mike Nash: "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."





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Chat log part 1

Robert Dutu: "Hello. How are you? Am Robert Dutu. I have a very important business proposition for your consideration. Please can we chat on it?"

Mike Nash: "let me guess? You have millions of dollars you want to give me. But I won't get it. Instead you will rip me off with advanced fee fraud. "

Robert Dutu: "you are right"

Mike Nash: "Well, appreciate the honesty"

Robert Dutu: "You are welcome. pleasure chatting with you. (handshake) "

Mike Nash: "Good luck in finding an idiot"

Robert Dutu: "thanks man"

Chat log part 2

Mike Nash about his short chat: "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."

The story continues. 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...

Mike Nash: "Any luck yet?"

Robert Dutu: "just 1 for over three hours"

Mike Nash: ":(Business getting slow for you? May I ask, how much you make doing this?"

Robert Dutu: "be my victim and you will get to know how much i can make from you"

Mike Nash: "(rofl) Very good :) You're a funny guy"

Robert Dutu: "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.

Mike Nash: "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"



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Robert Dutu: "what scam? this is real. i will send you details on it"

Mike Nash: "Over Skype?"

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.

Mike Nash: "Nice. That's actually quite well written. And instead of \$250M , you're saying \$16M... So, what's the next step?"

Robert Dutu: "wait, i have a client. he is discussing positive"

Mike Nash: "Ok."

Robert Dutu: (send the chat log of his 'client') ... and put it on the internet right? no! you will spoil my job"

Mike Nash: "Not a chance! There's already lots of articles about it and I bet, you do not use this account for more than some days at a time, right ? Next time it will be some other name."

Robert Dutu: "why all this question? do you want to join?"

Mike Nash: "No, I don't :)"

Robert Dutu: "good. what is your job? "

Mike Nash: "I think I could improve the text of your letter a bit - but it is better than 99% of the ones I receive normally. I work in security industry, we write a personal firewall product. it also detects things like keyloggers."

Robert Dutu: "very good. what is your pay?"

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

Mike Nash: what's yours?

Note: 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 Philipines. Of course, he could be sitting there in a \$5000 chair in his private compound saying that for all I know.

Mike Nash: "I like the way you call them clients. It implies a certain professionalism."

Robert Dutu: "thanks. if i ask you to send me some money will you? "

Mike Nash: "What would I recieve in exchange for a payment?"



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Robert Dutu: "that is the point. nobody wants to give anything out for free. but if i promise you \$16million usd i will end up getting more than your pay from you. you might even go to the extent of taking loan for me. which is very improper."

Note: 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...

Robert Dutu: "can you be of any assistance?"

Mike Nash: "It's a Friday - everyone thinks of the weekend, and the pub. wrong time of day. No, I can't really help you. you're committing a crime. "

Robert Dutu: "i know. i accept the fact that i am GUILTY. "

Mike Nash: "But you still won't tell me how much you make :) I'll bet your computer is more powerful than mine."

Robert Dutu: "... and will not hesitate to be prosecuted when the law catch up with me"

Robert Dutu: "there is no specific amount. i take whatever you can give me. even if is 100 or 50 \$. i will seriously appreciate it. 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."

Mike Nash: "I have this image in my head, of you in the bar after with all your friends. - This guy thought he was clever, but I still got him to send me \$100. Who wants a cigar? - "

Robert Dutu: "(rofl) very funny. i don't smoke. i only drink ocassionally. "

Robert Dutu: "i know at the end of this conversation you will publish our chat but that is not a problem. i am still very sincere"

Mike Nash: "Actually, I published already just the funny part"

Robert Dutu: "why?"

Mike Nash: "because usually, if I say something like that, they do not reply and move to next victim. It was different. It is like a policeman warning a car thief to drive carefully"

Robert Dutu: "Ahahahhahaha."

Robert Dutu: "how do i get you to send me some money?"

Mike Nash: "Unfortunately, you will not get me to send you money"

Robert Dutu: "don't be stingy my friend. it will not cost you anything to send some money to a stranger who is in need."

Mike Nash: "You probably make more money than me. Will you send me some?"



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Robert Dutu: "yes \$16million USD but we will have to finance the transfer together"

Mike Nash: "HAHAHAHAHAHAHAHAHAHA!"

Robert Dutu: "yes"

Mike Nash: "Touche!"

Robert Dutu: "and we share it at the end 50% each. \$8million usd for you. this is a life time opportunity."

Mike Nash: "You know, if you ever give up the scam business, you'd have a great career in comedy"

Robert Dutu: "if i were you i will grab opportunities like this with both hands and become rich overnight"

Mike Nash: "but we already know it is a scam, and you hate to do it"

Robert Dutu: "look my friend am not a scammer"

Mike Nash: "I haven't been drinking. So I am not likely to change my mind."

Note: 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 humor about him.

Emsi Software and Tall Emu cooperate

Emsi Software in Austria (a-squared Anti-Malware, Mamutu) has recently made an agreement to cooperate with Tall Emu in Australia. Both companies are active in the computer security sector, see synergies in their respective portfolios and view the collaboration as a way of achieving faster international growth and recognition. Emsi Software has now announced that it will be representing Tall Emu in Germany. The German version of Online Armor is expected to be released around the end of March or beginning of April 2009.

Original chat: <http://onlinearmorpersonalfirewall.blogspot.com/>

Homepage Emsi Software: <http://www.emsisoft.com/>

Homepage Tall Emu: <http://www.tallemu.com/>

ABOUT EMSI SOFTWARE

Emsi Software is a private company based in Austria. The rapidly growing company is a leading European provider of behavior analysis technology for analyzing software, especially Malware.



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The company was founded in 2003 by Christian Mairoll, realizing his vision of a virtual company: the 15 company employees are distributed all over the world but work together via the Internet as if they are sitting together in a real office. Emsi Software was awarded the Austrian "Constantinus" IT prize in 2005 for this innovative business concept.

The Emsi Software product range includes the security programs a-squared Anti-Malware, a-squared Free, a-squared HiJackFree, a-squared Anti-Dialer and, since the end of 2007, Mamutu.

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