



BALTIMORE POLICE DEPARTMENT CRIMINAL INTELLIGENCE SECTION



INTELLIGENCE BULLETIN

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E-Mailed Grand Jury Summons May Harm Computers

The FBI's Internet Crime Complaint Center (IC3) is alerting computer users about a spam e-mail that contains a fraudulent court subpoena. The bogus e-mail attempts to notify recipients that they are commanded to appear and testify before a Grand Jury.

At first glance, the e-mail appears authentic. It contains a court case number, federal code, name and address of a California federal court, court room number, issuing officers' names, and the court's seal. The spammer directs recipients to click the link provided in the e-mail in order to download and print associated information for their records. If the recipient clicks the link, a malicious code is downloaded onto their computer.

The e-mail also contains language threatening recipients with contempt of court charges if they fail to appear. Recipients are told the subpoena will remain in effect until the court grants a release. As with most spam, the content contains multiple spelling errors.

If you receive this type of notification and are unsure of its authenticity, you should contact the issuing court clerk's office for validation. Subpoenas are generally served in person, by mail or fax, not by e-mail.

"Computer based scams and fraudulent activities are rampant on the internet these days," said James E. Finch, Assistant Director of the FBI's Cyber Division. "People should delete unsolicited e-mail, especially from an unknown sender. If you accidentally open the e-mail, do not click any embedded links, as they may contain a virus or malware which will harm your computer."

The IC3 was established as a partnership between the Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI) and the National White Collar Crime Center (NW3C). It serves as the central reporting point and referral agency for Internet related criminal complaints.

If you have received one of the e-mailed subpoenas, please file a complaint online at www.ic3.gov. (FBI National Press Office)