

PC Scams to Avoid!

Do you frequently receive phone calls from India (or thereabouts) telling you that you have a problem with your PC and offer to fix it? IT IS A SCAM!

The phone conversation goes something like this:-

“Can I speak to Mr Nick Olsen please (they always mispronounce my name). My name is James (but could be female caller). I am phoning from Windows Support (or similar). We have been told by Microsoft that there is a problem with your PC. We can help you fix it”. These are not the exact words, but you get the general idea.

THEY ARE LYING! My recommendation is to say “No thanks” (if you wish to remain polite) and put the phone down immediately. It is most unlikely that they will phone back because they have already started dialling their next potential victim.

Basically they want to take control of your PC and get hold of your credit card details. Even if you don't have a credit card they will accept other forms of electronic funds transfer such as MoneyGram.

Note: Apple Mac users are not exempt from this scam. They too can be controlled remotely.

Recently, one of my friends fell for such a scam. He was a bit tired and stressed at the time and was therefore not thinking clearly. The scammers took control of his PC and pretended to start fixing it. After a short time they asked for his credit card details. Having received these details, they then terminated the call leaving his PC jammed up and unusable. Not only did they take £300 from his credit card account, but they attempted to take an additional £300 at the same time. Fortunately my friend's bank spotted the 2nd payment and blocked it. He therefore ONLY lost £300!

It is possible that some of these foreign callers are genuine, but would you really invite an unknown cold caller into your house to fix your PC or any other expensive piece of equipment? I hope not!

We all have PC problems of some sort, some minor some major. If you do have a real problem then contact a local literate ‘PC person’. If you don't know one then phone a friend for a personal recommendation. Speak to a neighbour. Enquire at the Corner Shop or check the back pages of the Henley Standard etc. A local ‘PC person’ will charge you of the order of £30 per hour. As noted above, the scammers may charge you £300!

Do not be distressed by these calls. If you terminate the phone call, then that should be the end of the story. The scammers cannot then take over your PC or ask for your credit card details.

Remember you can turn off your PC at ANY TIME by holding down the on/off button for 10 seconds. Even scammers cannot block that!

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