SSA’S PHISH YOUR COLLEAGUE CYBERSECURITY AWARENESS MONTH PROGRAM

FOR MORE INFORMATION
OIS.INFORMATION.SECURITY.TRAINING@SSA.GOV
As part of Cybersecurity Awareness Month (CAM), the Phish Your Colleague (PYC) activity invited SSA users to create their own phishing emails. The social engineering team objective was to educate and engage with SSA users about the risks of phishing attacks by encouraging employees to think like scammers, understand the tactics they use, and become better prepared to identify and report phishing emails. Users submitted their own phishing ideas for a chance to win recognition and contribute to improving the SSA’s security posture.
Submission Form

SSA users submitted their cleverest phishing attempts for “Phish Your Colleague” using an internally developed form. Users across the SSA shared their emails that they felt tested their coworkers’ vigilance.
Submission Repository

Our repository served as a centralized hub for analysis and evaluation by our cybersecurity team, allowing us to glean valuable insights about SSA’s user population understanding of phishing attacks.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Email Subject</th>
<th>Additional Notes</th>
<th>Contender?</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>PI Loss detected!</td>
<td>Employees are reminded about PI on a consistent basis and are encouraged to follow proper procedures to secure email leaving the agency. I think being notified they had a PI email may overcome any phishing reminders they may have.</td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>unauthorized shopping on government equipment</td>
<td></td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Taylor Swift tickets</td>
<td></td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CAM Participant</td>
<td></td>
<td>Winner</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Time Sheet Correction</td>
<td>With this message, I’d attach a document, per the email above, to make it look like the sender attached a letter (knowing that we shouldn’t open emails from untrusted senders). Also, I made the email address look like it’s coming from someone</td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>quick question</td>
<td>I hope you remember talking to me the other day about my claim I need to speak to you as soon as you are able. I’ve attached the letter you sent me and I think it’s wrong, can you look at it now?</td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PA 2023 Pennsylvania Commission's Virtual Award Ceremony</td>
<td></td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>You are eligible to register for a government refun</td>
<td></td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Your Meeting Notes</td>
<td></td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Your password will expire soon, update immediately.</td>
<td></td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Do Not Wait Until the Last Day – Make Your Functions Now</td>
<td></td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Website

Our resource website serves as the central hub for all things related to cybersecurity awareness and education within our organization. Through strategic design and user-friendly navigation, we seamlessly direct users to our “Phish Your Colleague” submission form, where participants can showcase their phishing prowess.

PHISH YOUR COLLEAGUE

The 2023 Phish Your Colleague event has concluded!

The Social Engineering Team would like to thank everyone who participated in the Phish Your Colleague program. We received over 300 submissions for phishing ideas! Everyone who submitted an entry has earned an Org Chart badge for helping to make this program a success!

2023 Winners

From the submissions, we selected 7 winners whose creative ideas were used in real live phishing exercises at the Agency! Below is the list of the winners along with the phishing emails they created!

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Winners</th>
<th>Phishing Exercise</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>OTS Rewards Program</td>
<td>![Image]</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>VPN update</td>
<td>![Image]</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CAM Participant</td>
<td>![Image]</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sending pictures of my new baby girl</td>
<td>![Image]</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Holiday Party Planning</td>
<td>![Image]</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Systems Account Termination - IMMEDIATE ACTION REQUIRED</td>
<td>![Image]</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Reminder: OnDrive retention policy</td>
<td>![Image]</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Bait the Hook, Earn the Rewards

The “Phish Your Colleague” program invites all SSA employees to submit their own phishing ideas for an organization-wide competition. This program encourages you to think like scammers, explore their tactics, and understand how to protect yourself and the Social Security Administration from their malicious activities. The submitted ideas will be utilized in phishing tests to assess the Social Security Administration ability to identify and respond to phishing attacks.

Characteristics of Phishing Messages

Understanding the characteristics of phishing messages is crucial to identifying and reporting them effectively. Here are some common traits to look out for:

- **Deceptive Senders**: Pay attention to the email address, display name, or any suspicious details that may indicate an impersonation attempt.
- **Urgency and Pressure**: Phishing emails often create a sense of urgency, making you feel the need to act quickly without thinking.
- **Requests for Personal Information**: Legitimate organizations rarely ask for personal information via email. Be cautious when providing sensitive data.
- **Unusual Links and Attachments**: Hover over links to verify their legitimacy before clicking. Be wary of unexpected attachments or downloads.
- **Poor Grammar and Spelling**: Phishing emails often contain grammar mistakes or awkward language usage.

Thank you for your dedication to the security of the SSA. Together, we can build a strong defense against phishing attacks and create a safer digital environment for everyone. For any questions or concerns regarding the “Phish Your Colleague” program, please reach out to [Contact Information].
Profile Badges

Our profile pages platform serves as dynamic visual representation of our organization’s structure and hierarchy. In addition to its traditional role, we’ve innovatively integrated a badge system to recognize and showcase individuals’ achievements. Through this system, users earn badges based on their participation and success in events like “Phish Your Colleague” demonstrating their commitment to enhancing our collective security posture. These badges are displayed on users’ ongoing engagement in our cybersecurity initiatives.

Participant Badge

Winner Badge
Communications

We kept users informed about events like “Phish Your Colleague” and badge awards through emails, internal messages, and our resource site.

Example of Blurbs:

Dive into the deep end of cybersecurity fun during Cybersecurity Awareness Month with our "Phish Your Colleague" event – it's a feeding frenzy of creativity!

From October 2nd to October 21st, 2023, we're challenging all SSA employees to unleash their inner cyber-sharks and whip up their most ingenious phishing ideas. Sink your teeth into the competition, and if your idea gets picked, watch as it takes center stage in a thrilling phishing exercise that will have those digital predators swimming in circles!

Plus, participants will snag an exclusive badge, while those whose ideas are selected will earn a rare badge that's truly a fintastic catch! Let's show 'em who rules the cyber-reef and keep our waters safe together by diving in here.

Example of Email Communications #1

![Image of Phish Your Colleague event]

A message to all SSA Employees,

[Details of the email message about the Phish Your Colleague event]

Thank you,
Example of Email Communications #2

Welcome to the agency’s first week of Cybersecurity Awareness Month (CAM) 2023 activities!

REGISTER NOW for Cybersecurity Jeopardy-LIVE!

We are registering NOW for participants in our LIVE, Interactive Cybersecurity Jeopardy game being held on Tuesday, October 17th from 12pm-1pm. Head over to the CAM Homepage and register to be a team captain, team member or audience member. Registration will close on 10/12, or once we reach the max number of participants, so ACT FAST, there are only a small number of seats available! Hope to see you there!

Phish Your Colleague

 Dive into the deep end of cybersecurity fun during Cybersecurity Awareness Month with our "Phish Your Colleague" event – it’s a thriving frenzy of creativity! From October 2nd to October 21st, 2023, we’re challenging all USA employees to unleash their inner cyber sharks and whip up their most ingenious phishing ideas. Sink your teeth into the competition, and if your idea gets picked, watch as it takes center stage in a thrilling phishing exercise that will have those digital predators swimming in circles! Plus, participants will snag an exclusive badge, while those whose ideas are selected will earn a rare badge that’s truly a fantastic catch! Let’s show who rules the cyber-roof and keep our waters safe together by dieting in here.

Cybersecurity Tip of the Month

Be sure to visit Cybersecurity Tip of the Month for advice on how to stay secure both at work and at home.

Earning Your Cybersecurity Champion Badge

You can become a Cybersecurity Champion! We will reward your participation in this year’s CAM events and activities with a Cybersecurity Champion badge for your profile. To earn the badge, you must attend at least one of the four CAM events and complete the survey you receive at the end of the month. Responses are important and will help in future CAM activity planning. For those who earned the badge last year, you will keep your badge, but you will gain a counter to your badge indicating your participation, for example, a 2 for your second year of participation, a 3 for your third and so on.

CAM 2023 Weekly Events Calendar

As a reminder, USA is hosting the following weekly events. Please visit the CAM Homepage to register for each activity you would like to attend, and you will receive an invitation email to add the event to your calendar. Participation subject to supervisory approval.

- Wednesday, 10/04 Cybersecurity Awareness Month - Keynote Address - 1:00 pm - 2:00 pm EST
- Wednesday, 10/11 Presentation on The State of Privacy Across the Federal Space - 1:00 pm - 2:00 pm EST
- Tuesday, 10/17 Cybersecurity Jeopardy-GIVE Lunch and Learn - 12:00 pm - 1:00 pm EST
- Wednesday, 10/18 Systems Talk - Penetration Testing - 1:00 pm - 2:00 pm EST
- Wednesday, 10/25 Presentation Highlighting the 4 Key Pillars of Cybersecurity Awareness Month - 1:00 pm - 2:00 pm EST

QUESTIONS

Please visit the CAM Homepage to learn more about the events and initiatives the agency is hosting to raise awareness about cybersecurity.

Feel free to let us know what you thought about this week’s tip and activity or if you have additional questions.
Phishing Email Submission Winners

Hundreds of submissions were sent in from across the agency. We grouped the submitters by role and region, and selected winners for each group. The winning submissions were sent to the colleagues from that group as phishing exercises.

Good Day,

It has come to our attention that you attempt to access protected PI files on your company issued computer. Please use link below to see log of activity and set up meeting to discuss PENDING termination for your account with system admin branch team lead director:

System Account Log and Meeting Invitation

Thanks,
System Admin Branch Team Lead Director

SSA is implementing a new reward program for exceptional work. Your manager had submitted your name entering you into the drawing to win a free PlayStation 5.

Congratulations, you've won!!! Click here to claim your prize! Be sure to fill out the form before November 17th or you will be withdrawn from the contest.

Thank you from everyone at SSA for your exceptional work!!

Thank you for your interest in partaking in this years Cyber Awareness Month activities!

As Social Security Employees stewards of the nations critical data, it is paramount that we remain vigilant in our Cyber Hygiene.

In order to receive credit for your efforts and to attain your badge(s), please follow this link and register: CAM Registry

Hi!

We started planning this year's holiday party already, can you believe it is already almost holiday time? We need more information for people in office so they can be invited. Would you kindly fill in your information on the document at this link so everyone can be involved? The information must be in the document by the end of the day, or you will miss out on the fun this party will bring! Also on document is space for you to put in your purchase information since we purchase gifts for everyone this year, we will all chip in! Just put in your credit card or bank info and we will handle buying door prize and white elephant gifts for office people.

Happy Holidays!
Sunshine Crew
I just wanted to share a picture with you of our daughter who was just born.

In order to be in compliance with our retention policy, we will be deleting all stored data older than three years. You can verify which documents in your OneDrive account are subject to deletion here.

If a user was susceptible to the email, clicking on the link took them to the regular training, that also included this message:

**The Impact of “Phish Your Colleagues”**

The Phish your Colleagues program was an experiment to shift cyber security strategy by recognizing that our employees are not just targets but crucial allies in our defense against malicious actors. By involving employees in the process of crafting phishing, we are not only fostering a deeper understanding of cybersecurity threats, but also instilling a culture of vigilance and responsibility, particularly among those who interact directly with the public. These collaborative efforts help us better fortify our defenses and promote a stronger reporting culture.