

Teaching Security Lesson 3: Social Engineering

Assignment: Analog to Digital

Sample Responses

Example Text for a Grandparent Scam Poster

- *Someone calls an older person and claims to be their grandchild who needs to have money wired to them right away (for example, because they got arrested or they lost their wallet on a trip).*
- *This scam works because:*
 - *A grandparent is often very protective of their grandchildren and would want to help them whenever possible.*
 - *A grandparent might not know if it's plausible. (So the scammer may ask the grandparent not to tell the parents, because parents would be more likely to know if the grandchild was on a trip.)*
- *In the digital age, the grandparent scam would be effective via text message or email.*
 - *Scammers send email messages like this all the time.*
 - *The scammer can spoof the grandchild's phone number or email address.*
- *Different than the phone version:*
 - *The scammer can provide a link to send the money directly, with little effort needed from the grandparent. Today there are many online and text message money transfer services that make it very easy to send money quickly. Then the grandparent won't have time to think it through like if they had to physically go to a wire transfer office.*
- *Similar to the phone version:*
 - *Scammer needs to know contact details for both grandchild and grandparent (phone numbers, or email for digital). It helps to know school, age, and other information. (Difference: that info is often easy to get on the Internet these days.)*
- *The digital version will be easier to pull off because it's easier to manipulate a text message or email, without having to deal with voice recognition or remember too many details about the family.*

Example Text for a Pig-in-a-Poke Poster

Analog Version:

1. *Someone sells you a bag or box that they claim has something valuable in it, but it turns out it's not what they said and is probably worthless.*
2. *This scam plays on the scarcity of the item. If it's expensive and there are not many available, but someone is selling it for a lower price, you might be too excited about getting it before it sells out. It also plays on assuming others are telling the truth.*

Digital Version:

3. *Example: The new Jordans are selling for top dollar. A scammer makes knock-offs and puts them online for a little less than the going price of the real shoes. When the customer gets the shoes in the mail, they may figure out they are fake, or maybe they never get any shoes at all. But by then the scammer's website is gone. This works because Jordans are so popular that prices get inflated, and people might not want to wait in a long line at a store, where they might sell out.*
4. *The scammer will have to make a legitimate-looking website. They could copy pictures from the Nike website. The website and payment system shouldn't be traceable to the scammer. If the scammer is trying to stay in business by hoping people won't know the difference, they also need the ability to manufacture or buy some fake shoes (same as analog).*
5. *The speed of the Internet makes it possible for this scam to generate a lot of money in just a few days, because you don't have to sell to individual customers. Payment is required before shipping, so the money is all collected quickly. If they're not even pretending to be real, the scammer can take down the site before customers would even have gotten the shoes, to avoid investigation.*

Which Works Better?

6. *The digital version is easier because everything can be done from the comfort of the scammer's home, if they have the technical skills to make a website and hide where the money is going. They can also buy some fake shoes online from home.*