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Microsoft Impersonation Scam

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October 26, 2015

Your BBB continues to receive multiple calls each day on the Microsoft impersonation scam. Help us get the word out by warning your family and friends of this pesky scam!

How the Scam Works:

You get a telephone call from someone claiming to be with tech support from a well-known software company. Microsoft is a popular choice. The callers often have strong accents but use common names such as "Adam" or "Bill." The scammers may know your name and other personal information, which they get from publicly available phone directories. They might even guess what computer operating system you're using.

The caller tells you that your computer is sending error messages, and they've detected a virus on it. He says only a tech support employee can remove the virus, but first you need to grant him access to your machine. If you give the OK, the caller will run a scan of your files and actually point out how the virus has infected the computer. The scammers then offer to remove the virus.... for a fee. Of course, they need your credit card details first.

Here's the twist. Those who allow the caller remote access to their computers, whether they paid for the virus to be removed or not, report difficulties with their computer afterwards, according to the FBI's Internet Crime Complaint Center (<http://www.ic3.gov/>). Some say their computers will not turn on or certain programs/files are inaccessible. Some victims even report taking their computers for repair, and the technicians confirm software has been installed.

What to do if "Tech Support" Calls?

- Never give control of your computer to a third party unless you can confirm that it is a legitimate representative of a computer support team with whom you are already a customer.
- Never provide your credit card or financial information to someone claiming to be from tech

support.

- Take the caller's information down and report it to your local authorities or the FTC (<https://www.ftc.gov>).
- If you did allow a caller to access your computer:
 - Change the passwords for your computer, email and online banking/credit card accounts.
 - Be sure to run a virus scan
 - Consider placing a fraud alert (<http://www.ftc.gov/bcp/edu/microsites/idtheft/consumers/defend.html#Whatisafraudalert>) on your credit report if you shared personal and banking information with the scammer.

Start With Trust® and contact your BBB if you have questions about a suspicious phone call you have received. Your BBB can be reached at 800-873-2224 or at bbbsw.org.

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