

Students should never give out any of their personal information using e-mails, a medium easily harnessed by identity thieves. Personal information includes account names and passwords to shopping Web sites, credit card information and Social Security numbers.

GRAPHIC ILLUSTRATION BY JASON STEELMAN/ THE GAMECOCK

Welcome to eBay

Dear valued customer

[Need Help?](#)

We regret to inform you your eBay account could be suspended if you don't re-update your account information. To resolve this problem please [click here](#) and re-enter your account information. If your problems could not be resolved your account will be suspended for a period of 24 hours, after this period your account will be terminated.

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SCAMMED

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Colin Crawford, a third-year statistics student and two-year eBay veteran, said he might have fallen victim to a scam e-mail if he had been in a hurry when he received it.

"I do more selling than buying," he said. "I would feel uncomfortable about answering it after doing so much business with eBay, but I wouldn't think about it if I were busy trying to get something through. I like eBay a lot."

Sasha Noorani, a first-year business and psychology student, said she'd received e-mail from spammers pretending to represent the legitimate Web site Half.com.

"There were misspelled words. That was a big clue that it wasn't official," she said. "I would never give my username or password in an e-mail. I'd go to the Web site."

Web sites are much more trustworthy than e-mail.

"Never reply to e-mails that ask for personal information," eBay advises its

users. "E-mail is a risky way to send your personal information — especially financial or other sensitive information. You can help protect your identity by refusing to give personal information (such as Social Security Numbers and account passwords) via e-mail and by never downloading e-mail attachments that are sent from someone you do not know."

There are inherent giveaways embedded within phony e-mail, including sender address and e-mail content, but the difference between a legitimate missive and a fake can be hard to spot.

"You can look for certain clues," Noorani said, "and if I have a question I just call a manager."

There are certain inarguably effective methods of combating Internet identity theft. First-year English student Shannon Feeney said she doesn't shop online at all.

"If I need something, I just go to the store," she said.

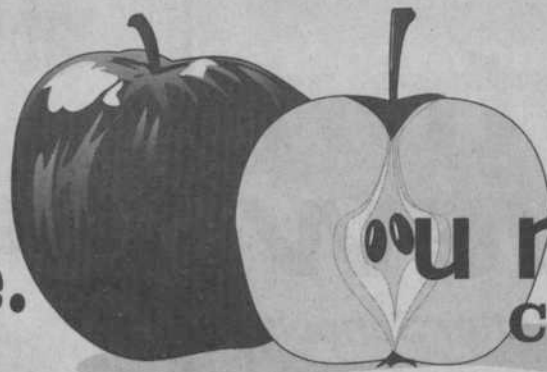
Warning signs of a spoof e-mail

- A. Sender's e-mail address
Spoof e-mail may include a forged e-mail address in the "From" line. Some might actually be real e-mail addresses that have been forged. (From: billing@ebay.com; From: eBayAcctMaintenance@eBay.com; From: support@ebay.com).
- B. E-mail greeting
Many spoof e-mails will begin with a general greeting such as "Welcome eBay User."
- C. Urgency
Claims that eBay is updating its files or accounts — Don't worry, it is highly unlikely that eBay will lose your account information.
- D. Account status threat
Most spoof e-mails try to deceive you with the threat that your account is in jeopardy and you will not be able to buy or sell on eBay if you do not update it immediately.
- E. Links in an e-mail
While many e-mails have links included, just remember that these links can be forged, too.
- F. Requests personal information
Requests that you enter sensitive personal information such as a User ID, password or bank account number by clicking on a link or completing a form within the email are a clear indicator of a spoof e-mail.
Source: eBay.com

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