

SCAM OF THE WEEK:

Cracking the QR Code

What is a QR Code

Have you ever seen a poster that had a jumbled-looking, square-shaped barcode printed on it? These unique squiggles make up a QR code. A QR code (Quick Response code) is an interactive link that you can scan with your smartphone. The link could take you to a website, start a file download, or open an app on your phone to take an action, like adding an event to your calendar. QR codes are fun, easy, and alluring because they can be placed on anything from business cards to a bag of chips.

How Can Cybercriminals Use QR Codes?

Unfortunately, since a QR code is nothing more than a fancy-looking link, cybercriminals can use them just like they would use a link in a phishing email. There are many free websites that allow you to create your own QR code that links to anything you choose. This means that the bad guys can create a QR code that links to a malicious website or downloads malware onto your device. Once they have created their malicious QR code, it can be emailed, posted to social media, printed out on flyers, or even made into stickers and placed on top of legitimate QR codes.

Tips to Safely Use QR Codes

Follow these tips to stay safe when scanning QR codes.

****Never scan a QR code from an unknown or untrustworthy source. Did you receive a random, anonymous flyer claiming you could win the latest iPhone if you scan the code? Don't trust it!**

****When scanning a QR code, be sure to use a scanner app that provides a preview of the destination. This feature gives you a chance to review the URL and decide if the QR code is safe.**

****If you scan a QR code and the URL looks cryptic, or the website requires a login, or the site is unrelated to what you scanned, close out of your browser immediately.**