

MICHIGAN SUPREME COURT



Office of Public Information

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

E-mail scam uses fake court summons to target victims, possibly to transmit computer virus or malware

LANSING, MI, January 17, 2014 – It may look official: An e-mail notice to appear in court, claiming that the recipient is accused of “illegal software use” or other offenses. The notice instructs the recipient to download an attached “complaint” or click on a website link.

But don’t be fooled, warns the State Court Administrative Office, the administrative agency of the Michigan Supreme Court. The e-mail is a scam, likely aimed at planting a virus or other malware on victims’ computers.

“Anyone receiving one of these e-mails should not open the attachment or click on the link,” cautioned State Court Administrator John A. Hohman, Jr. “This is not how Michigan courts handle summonses or notices to appear.”

The scam has been reported in a number of other states, including Georgia and Louisiana, Hohman noted. “At this time, we’re not hearing reports of the scam in Michigan, but the public should be alert,” Hohman said. In some versions of the scam, the sender’s e-mail appears to come from well-known law firms, with the e-mail impersonating the law firm’s domain name, Hohman noted.

The body of the e-mail may be similar to the following example:

Please be informed that you are expected in the Court of _____ on February 2nd, 2014 at 9:30 a.m., where the hearing of your case of illegal software use will take place.

You may obtain protection of a lawyer, if necessary. Please bring your identity documents to the Court on the named day. Attendance is compulsory.

The detailed complaint is attached to this letter. Please download and read it thoroughly.

Signed, Clerk of the _____ Court

Those who receive these e-mail scams are encouraged to notify their local police or sheriff’s office, as well as the court mentioned in the e-mail.

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