



Role of Social Media in Cybersecurity Threats

By: Ethan Spruill

Why Social Media?

- Large amount of users
- Personal data easily accessible
- Verification process of users is not secure
- Spreading of information is made simple and fast



Common Threats

- **Identity Theft:** Stealing personal info for fraudulent activities
- **Fake Giveaways:** Fraudulent offers to lure users into scams
- **Malware Links:** Malicious software spread through posts or messages
- **Lifejacking:** Gaining unauthorized access by tricking users into linking
- **Cyberbullying:** Harassment or abuse of any kind online



Propagation of Threats

Virality

- Maximize sharing
- Links can spread to thousands within minutes

Amplification

- Bot networks artificially increase likes and visibility of a post
- Make scams look more legit

Trust

- Users trust posts shared by friends
- Impersonated influencers or brands manipulate people more easily



Why do people fall for it?



1. **Psychological Vulnerabilities & Cognitive Biases**
 - Fear, urgency, and high-pressure situations
 - Confirmation bias, optimism bias, and authority bias
2. **Emotional & Social Factors**
 - Scams prey on emotional states
 - People who are more agreeable or trusting
 - Desire for quick financial gains
3. **Situational & Awareness Factors**
 - Lack of knowledge
 - Overconfidence
 - Impulsive responses



How can we combat this?



- Use strong, unique passwords for each social media account
- Two-Factor Authentication
- Limit personal data sharing
- Have a more cautious mindset
- Report/block suspicious accounts or malicious content

Conclusion...

- Social media is a powerful tool but is also a massive target for Cyber Threats
- Attackers exploit virality, amplification, trust and human psychology
- Combating threats requires user responsibility and platform action
- Staying informed and cautious helps create a safer online environment for all users

References

NortonLifeLock. (2024, April 26). *Top social media threats to watch out for*. Norton.
<https://us.norton.com/blog/emerging-threats/social-media-threats>

Panda Security. (2023, October 18). *Social media threats: What are they and how to stay protected*. Panda Security.
<https://www.pandasecurity.com/en/mediacenter/social-media-threats/>

Cherry, K. (2024, January 29). *Why we fall for scams*. Verywell Mind.
<https://www.verywellmind.com/why-we-fall-for-scams-8705528>

House of I.T. (n.d.). *Cybersecurity: How social media reshaped the world in 10 years*.
<https://houseofit.ph/blog/cybersecurity-how-social-media-reshaped-the-world-in-10-years>

Analyst1. (2023, September 13). *Global cyberattack on the US government*. Analyst1.
<https://analyst1.com/global-cyberattack-on-the-us-government/>

Rivas, D. (2024, March 13). *Protect yourself on social media: What are the threats?* Digital Media Ninja.
<https://digitalmedianinja.com/blog/social-media-privacy/>