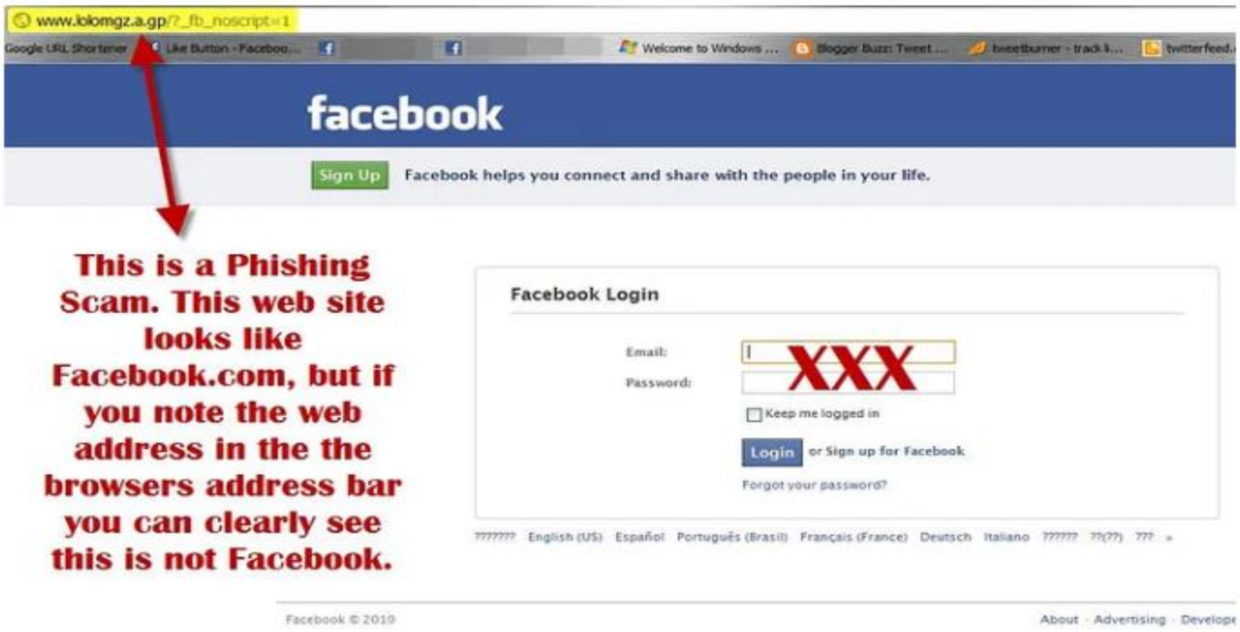
Journal Entry #6: How to Spot a Fake Website?

As technology advance we have to look closely at URL's, name spelling and designs of webpage to spot fake ones. Many new scammers use more sophisticated design to fool people out of their personal information. Figure 1 show us an example of a fake Facebook page. At first glance the page looks real, but if you look closely at the top left corner the URL address is not facebook.com but a combination of letters and extensions .a.gp instead of the .com one. Another way of spotting a fake webpage is a misspelled URL, like www.y0utub3.com instead of https://youtube.com, which is the real address.


www.lolomgz.a.gp/?_fb_noscript=1
Google URL Shortener
Like Button - Faceboo...
Welcome to Windows ...
Blogger Buzz: Tweet ...
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Sign Up
Facebook helps you connect and share with the people in your life.
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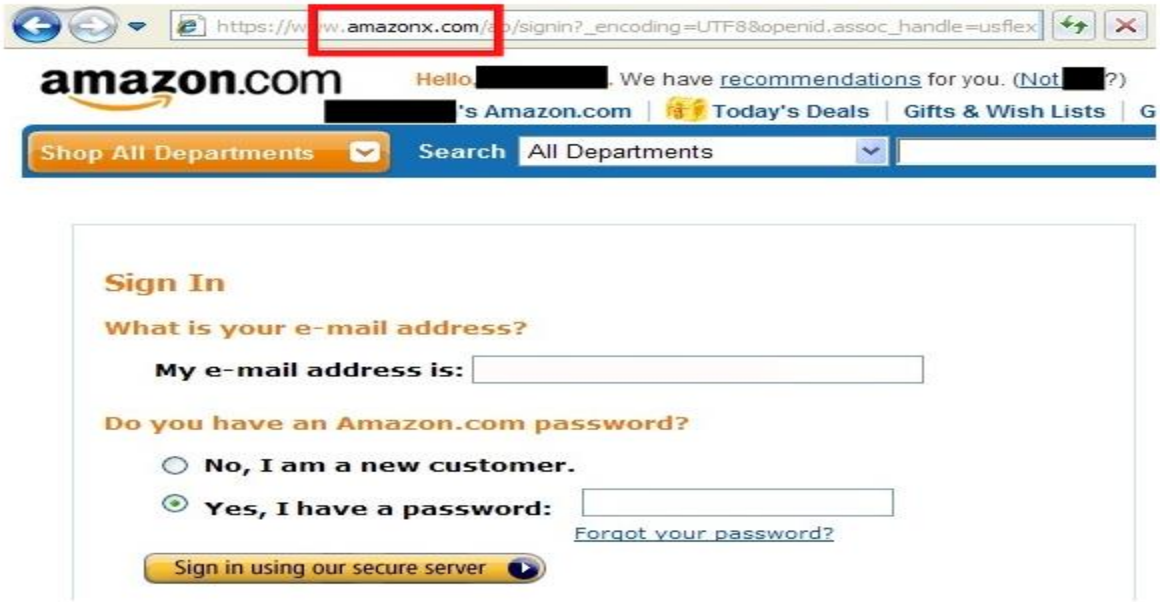
This is a Phishing Scam. This web site looks like Facebook.com, but if you note the web address in the the browsers address bar you can clearly see this is not Facebook.

Figure 1: Example fake Facebook page. In yellow top left corner is a fake URL. (Rivera, 2019)

The next example in Figure 2 shows a very convincing website. It uses Amazon template to make it look real and even provide https transactions in order to make it look legitimated. In this one we have to take a very close look at the URL. Instead of reading https://www.amazon.com it reads https://www.amazonx.com. The scammer was very careful to make it look legitimate and only one letter changes everything. A person receiving an alert email of possible deals or updates needed that it is in a hurry will make the mistake of trusting this website and be fool by it

Other examples are:

- BankoffAmerica.com (contains an extra f)
- Paypal.com.secure-site.com (the domain is secure-site.com not .com)
- WaImart.com (A capital I is used instead of lower-case l)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Hello [redacted]. We have recommendations for you. (Not [redacted]?)
[redacted]'s Amazon.com | Today's Deals | Gifts & Wish Lists | G
Shop All Departments
Search All Departments
Sign In
What is your e-mail address?
My e-mail address is:
Do you have an Amazon.com password?
○ No, I am a new customer.
● Yes, I have a password:
Forgot your password?
Sign in using our secure server

Figure 2: The website looks legitimate and even have "secure" transactions but a letter is added to the URL. (Carolan, 2018)

Another example in Figure 3 is also the URL. The page looks almost identical to the PayPal welcome page but the URL is x-paypal.com instead of paypal.com. Many of the fake websites today used SSL inscription to fool the persona and used design pages to copy almost exactly the fake website to the point that it looks real. By being careful, paying attention to the wording used, the email addresses that do not come from an official account, we can protect ourselves.

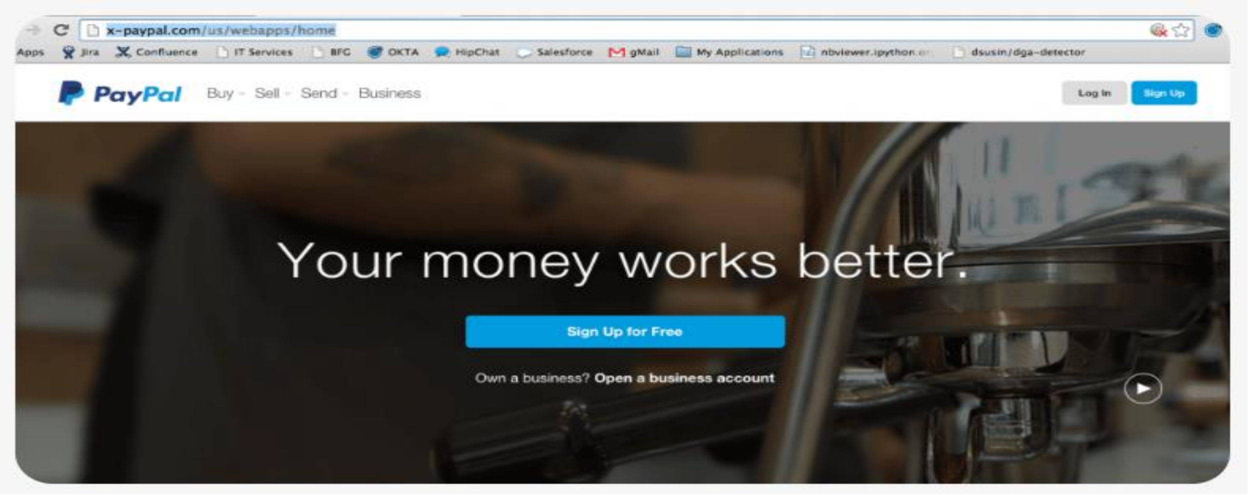

Figure 3. It shows a fake PayPal page that looks almost identical to the real one and the difference can be spotted in the extra x- in the URL. (Toohil, 2022).

Reference:

Rivera, M. (March 4, 2019). *How can you tell fake/real websites?* Medium.com. Retrieved from https://medium.com/@rivera.marcangelo2001/how-you-can-tell-fake-real-websites-709849495fea

Carolan, N. (November 8, 20018). *Don't take the bait – a guide to online phishing scams.* Invotra. Retrieved from https://digileaders.com/dont-take-the-bait-a-guide-to-online-phishing-scams/

Toohil, R. (December 13, 2022). *How to Identify Fake Websites: 11 Warning Signs.* Aura. Retrieved from https://www.aura.com/learn/how-to-identify-fake-websites#:~:text=1.,within%20the%20fake%20domain%20name.