Phishing emails appearing to come from Blackboard

Issue Overview

Phishing scams use fraudulent emails to get users to reveal confidential information. Such emails usually look like they come from a legitimate organization such as Blackboard but contain links to illegitimate sites.

Blackboard has become aware of a mass phishing scam targeting customers using Blackboard Learn. To be clear, Blackboard Learn has not been hacked -- these are emails sent directly from a spammer to emails it may have harvested by spidering the institution's websites for email addresses.

Examples of Phishing Attempts

It is important to realize that the messages will vary.

EXAMPLE 1: "RECEIVED NEW MAIL"

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Purported Sender</th>
<th>Blackboard ITS</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Email Subject</td>
<td>Received New Mail[School Board]</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Content</td>
<td>From: Blackboard ITS [<a href="mailto:its@blackboard.com">mailto:its@blackboard.com</a>]</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Sent: Monday, June 22, 2015 12:16 PM</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>To:</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Subject: Received New Mail[School Board]</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Dear blackboard user:</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>You have 2 unread messages from your Admin stored in your Blackboard area.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Please login below to view messages!Key474575876767</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>The above link will become inactive 10 minutes after mail has been read.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Thanks for your attention</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Regards,</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Blackboard ITS</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

EXAMPLE 2: "NEW COURSE INFORMATION"

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Purported Sender</th>
<th>Blackboard Learn <a href="mailto:notifications@blackboard.com">notifications@blackboard.com</a></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Email Subject</td>
<td>New Course Information</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Content</td>
<td>Good Morning,</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>An important course form has been posted to you through the Blackboard Learning System.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Please sign in immediately to view the form.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Click here to sign in &lt;--Link to malicious website</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Thank you,</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Blackboard Learn.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
EXAMPLE 3: "BLACKBOARD LEARN: IMPORTANT NEW COURSE"

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Purported Sender</th>
<th>Blackboard Learn <a href="mailto:email@blackboard.com">email@blackboard.com</a></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Email Subject</td>
<td>Blackboard Learn : Important new course</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Content</td>
<td>Dear Staffs/Students</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Access to e-mail is about to expire,</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>We recommend that you upgrade your</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>account to avoid the suspension.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Please click on the link below to</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>re-activate your account, please sign in</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>to Blackboard system immediately.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Click here to sign in to the Blackboard</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>System &lt;-- Link to malicious website</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Thank You.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>© 2013 Blackboard</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

EXAMPLE 4: "NOTICE: IMPORTANT NEW COURSES ALERT."

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Purported Sender</th>
<th>Blackboard Learn <a href="mailto:email@blackboard.com">email@blackboard.com</a></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Email Subject</td>
<td>Blackboard Learn : Important new course</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Content</td>
<td>Dear Member</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Access to e-mail is about to expire,</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>We recommend that you upgrade your</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>account to avoid the suspension.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Please click on the link below to</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>to Blackboard system immediately.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Click here to sign in to the Blackboard</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>System &lt;-- Link to malicious website</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Thank You.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>© 2013 Blackboard</td>
</tr>
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</table>

Solution

- Notify your end users that these emails are phishing emails and to delete and disregard the emails.
- Do NOT go to the link in the email. Delete the email immediately.
- Please continue to send questionable messages to spam@jhu.edu. For immediate response, please call the Help Desk (410-516-HELP).

More Information

- http://www.it.johnshopkins.edu/security/phishing.html