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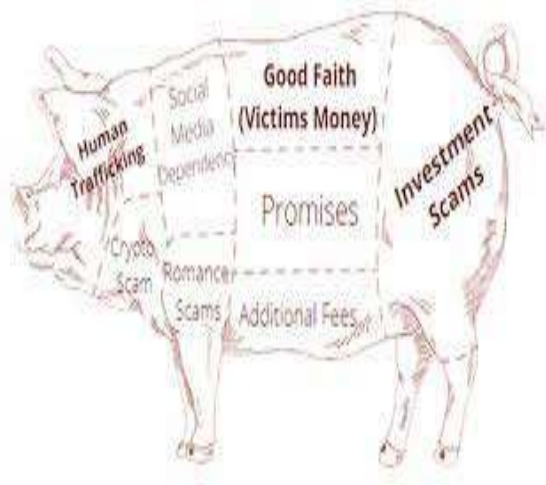
Domain Seizure Project



Domain Seizure Project Summary

Project: Domain Seizure Project

Project Owner: State's Attorney and United States Secret Service



Project Background: The Secret Service and the DuPage County SAO worked together on a sting to catch three individuals involved in a "Pig Butchering" scam against citizens of DuPage County. A Pig Butchering scam consists of a fraudster posing as a friendly person or romantic interest to deceive individuals into providing funds for fictitious emergencies, investments, employment opportunities, and other schemes, only to disappear with the money after they receive it.

The IT department's Network and Web Services teams were asked to host a website with a splash page for 90 days to redirect victims of the crime to the Secret Service for help.



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Pig Butchering Scam

How the Scam Works – 10 Simple Steps:

1. Create a fake identity

Pig butchers often begin by creating a phony online persona, typically accompanied by an alluring photo (which itself might have been stolen) and images that convey a glamorous lifestyle.

2. Initiate contact

Once they've got an online profile, fraudsters send messages to people on dating or social networking sites.

3. Win the trust of the target

The next step is starting a conversation with a potential victim to gain their trust.

4. Sign them up

Before long, the swindlers will pivot to a discussion of investing. They'll claim their purported investing successes, perhaps sharing screenshots of a brokerage account with gaudy numbers. They'll try to convince targets to open an account at their online brokerage.

5. Get them to put real money into the fake account

Once marks agree to learn investing tricks, the scammers will "help" them with the investment process. The fraudsters will explain how to wire money from their bank account to a crypto wallet and eventually to the fake brokerage.

[SOURCE: propublica.org](https://www.propublica.org)



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Pig Butchering Scam

6. “Prove” that it’s legitimate

Scammers often allay initial doubts by letting targets withdraw money once or twice to convince them that the process is trustworthy.

7. Manipulate them into investing more

Pig butchering guides offer insights on exploiting marks’ emotional and financial vulnerabilities to manipulate them into depositing more and more funds.

8. Cut them off

Once targets reach a limit and become unwilling to deposit more funds, their seeming investment success suddenly stops. Withdrawals become impossible, or they suffer a big “loss” that wipes out their entire investment.

9. Use their desperation to your advantage

Scammers will then turn the screws of manipulation tighter by telling victims there’s a potential solution: If they deposit more cash into the brokerage, they can regain what they lost.

10. Taunt and depart

Once the targets know they’ve been swindled, the fraudsters often insult or taunt them. They soon go silent, and the websites of their phony brokerages stop working.

[SOURCE: propublica.org](https://www.propublica.org)



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Domain **Seizure** Project

Project Highlights:

- The project targeted three offenders and 352 unique fraudulent domains. Offenders were from outside the country. As a result, no legal action could be taken against them, but the splash page saved close to 18,000 visitors from being scammed.
- There were 17,800 page visits to the splash page.
- Involved agencies: State's Attorney, Secret Service Cyber Fraud Task Force, and Information Technology Department (Web Team [Debbie Deacy], NSG [Joe Hamlin]).
- It is a first-of-its-kind operation for the Chicago Secret Service Office (includes the United States Secret Service, Chicago Field Office, and Cyber Fraud Task Force) and the State of Illinois.
- While no prosecution or arrests were made, all 352 domains used to defraud our citizens were seized and taken down. This costs the offenders time and money.
- The seized domains were returned to the Namecheap domain registrar.





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Thank you!
