



UNIVERSITEIT VAN PRETORIA
UNIVERSITY OF PRETORIA
YUNIBESITHI YA PRETORIA

Information Technology Services

Information and Cybersecurity Awareness

Email ithelp@up.ac.za | www.up.ac.za/itsecurity



Be alert

'Do your part – be cyber smart'

Your boss sent you an email asking for urgent help. Apparently, he is in a meeting and cannot be reached by phone. You feel flattered that he asked you for help. However, you are a bit unsure, is this real?

Introduction

Don't believe everything you receive by email or read on the Web. There are very few checks on the content published on the Internet. Anyone can post anything. Cybercriminals thrive in this environment.

Just as you need to be alert when you walk alone down a dark alley at night, you need to remain alert to the tell-tale signs that indicate danger in the cyberworld. Being alert to a few basic signs at all times, even when you are tired or in a hurry, can help with this.

How to protect yourself

For email, be on the alert if:

- your mail service warns you that a message could be dangerous;
- a message does not contain a proper salutation as would be expected in the context, it has a sense of



urgency, and the address of the alleged sender differs from their normal address;

- a message with very little information prompts you to open an attachment such as an invoice or a CV;
- you are invited by an unknown institution to attend a conference or to publish in a journal;
- a message informs you that you have won a prize in a competition that you did not enter, are to receive a large amount of money from an unknown person in a foreign country, or any such news that, if you think about it, really does not make sense.

When surfing the web, be on the alert if:

- your anti-virus or firewall indicates a potential threat;
- an unexpected message pops up indicating that a problem was identified on your device and you need to respond by clicking a button or downloading a file;
- access to software, games, music, movies, books and items with copyright that you usually need to pay for, is offered free;
- you need to enter sensitive information on a website but a closed padlock does not appear next to the web address at the top of the screen, indicating that traffic to the website is not secured and can be intercepted.

In all the cases above, do not respond, or otherwise, obtain advice from an informed person before you do.

SEE MORE



[WATCH: How to spot a phish](#)

READ MORE



[Messaging / Smishing attacks](#)

[Business email compromise](#)

DO MORE



[Better safe than sorry](#)