

Advance Fee Scammers Using Cloned FB Accounts To Gain Victims

Facebook profile cloning describes a tactic in which scammers create fake Facebook profiles using images, friend lists, and other information stolen from a targeted user. Once fraudsters have cloned a user's profile, they can then send out friend requests to friends of the cloning victim. Some friends of the cloning victim may mistakenly believe that these second friend requests are legitimate and accept them.

By this point, the scammers will have built a fake profile that closely mirrors their victim's genuine Facebook profile and will have also acquired at least a few of the victim's friends via bogus friend requests.

Thus prepared, the scammers can launch spam and scam campaigns in their victim's name. One way they might do this is to try to draw the victim's friends into an advance fee scam.

The following dialogue, which was submitted by a Hoax-Slayer reader, illustrates how such scam attempts work. For clarity, we'll call the cloning victim "Rick" and his targeted friend "Jason":

Scammer posing as Rick:

how are you doing am sorry for me resending you a friend request it is just that i got a trojan virus on my old profile so this is my new account now

Jason

I am doing good and no problem with the friend request.

Scammer posing as Rick:

Okay and Did you heard about the good news on facebook about the Ceo of facebook founder Mark zuckerberg ??

Jason

no I didn't

Scammer posing as Rick:

The promotion was made to some facebook user in other to benefit from them its a randomly picked of profile on facebook and get \$50,000.00 did you get yours from them ???

Jason

nope

Scammer posing as Rick:

UPS delivered the money to my door step. I saw your name on the list with the shipping company agent , so I thought I would see if you have gotten it yet ? i mean facebook is giving out the money for some randomly selected users for compensating all users. I think you should contact the agent in charge is online here add him on FB via this link for better chat (link removed) can message him and tell him that a friend told you about these and you are here to claim your money

Jason:

ok tks

Scammer posing as Rick:

I'm very Happy cause when i receive the money from him i payed off my old bills and save the rest into my bank account and i want you to do the same likewise i did, cause i think is part of life time. opportunity don't miss use it. Get in the touch with the agent as quick as you can

Jason:

ok will do tks again

So what is the scammer up to here? What is his motivation? Here's what's happening:

The scammer, posing as the recipient's friend Rick, first explains why he had to send a second friend request. (Supposedly, the original Facebook Profile was so inflicted with the dreaded "trojan virus" that a new profile had to be created).

The scammer then claims that he has just been awarded \$50,000 in a [promotion organized by Facebook CEO Mark Zuckerberg](#). And, explains the scammer, Jason can also get this \$50,000 award by contacting the agent in charge of the promotion.

Of course, the promotion exists only in the mind of the scammer. Neither Rick nor Jason has been awarded so much as a cent from Facebook. This is a [typical advance fee scam](#) albeit delivered in a somewhat different way. If Jason had fallen for the ruse and friended the "agent" as instructed, he would have soon been asked to pay a series of up-front fees, ostensibly to allow transfer of the \$50,000 award. Requests for further fees, would have continued until Jason realized what was happening or ran out of available funds to send. The supposed "agent" would either be the scammer himself or another person working with the scammer.

Because the scammer's messages appear to

come from a person recipients know and trust, they may be more likely to fall for such tricks.

Be wary of any second friend requests that you receive from your Facebook friends. Always check that the request really did come from your friend before accepting. And, in general, be very cautious of any claims that you have won a large sum of money on a lottery or promotion that you have never even entered.

To avoid becoming a victim of Facebook profile cloning, remain vigilant and always make sure that you use privacy settings that guard as much of your information as possible from strangers. If you discover or suspect that your profile has been cloned, be sure to warn your friends not to accept any second friend requests from you.