

Tech Tuesday: Building a digital defense against holiday travel scams

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TECH TUESDAY: Holiday Travel Scams

- Use a reputable rental or travel business.
- Check reviews, privacy/security policies, refund policies & payment options.
- Confirm how the company screens its hosts & what protections it offers.
- Don't let the host force you into a quick decision.
- Report fraud to www.ic3.gov.

 **FBI** FEDERAL BUREAU OF INVESTIGATION

Portland Field Office

Time is drawing short, and your partner really wants to go visit family for the holidays. You really don't want to spend a week living with the in-laws so you start doing some research on rentals.

You find a great deal on a place with availability when you need it. Sounds awesome – if it is legitimate.

Scammers can easily pull images from reputable sites and create a new listing of their own. You are asked to pay by a cash transfer app, wire transfer, or cryptocurrency, and everything is fine until you show up and find your rental is a just another racket.

Third party airline and hotel booking sites can present their own risks. You get an email or see a social media post about some cheap tickets or rooms. You click and immediately jump on the deal. Soon you receive a request for more info such as bank account details to confirm the agreement. You have just been triple-whammied. You will lose your money, you likely downloaded malware onto your device, and you gave the bad actor access to your financial information.

Here's how to protect yourself:

- Use a reputable rental company or travel business. Check reviews, privacy policies, security policies, and payment options.
- Confirm refund or dispute resolution procedures up front.
- Research the rental company. How does it screen its hosts? What protections does it offer?
- Don't allow the host or travel agent's urgency to push you into a poor decision. Bad actors will use fear of missing out to get you to act without thinking.
- Don't click on unsolicited links or attachments.

If you are the victim of an online scam, you should report the incident to the FBI's Internet Crime Complaint Center at www.ic3.gov or call your FBI local office.