E-card (Electronic Greeting Card) Security Tips

The joy of the holiday season is upon us and this year many of us will send and receive holiday electronic greeting cards (e-cards) to share our well wishes with friends and family.

E-cards have become popular over the past few years because they are inexpensive, convenient and a great solution when you need to send something at the last minute.

To ensure that a holiday greeting is ALL that you are sending or receiving, it’s important to consider some of the dangers of e-cards.

- Even though an e-card may appear to be legitimate, once it is clicked on or downloaded, it may contain spam, spyware or a computer virus. Possible results could be that your computer becomes bogged down with pop-up ads, starts displaying inappropriate images, or starts sending e-cards out to everyone in your address book that appear to be legitimate e-cards from you.
- Never open an e-card or an attachment from an unknown sender, the attachment could actually be a Trojan sent by a scammer. To steal your identity, scammers use Trojans to trick you into submitting your personal information (social security number, banking information, credit card number) on what appears to be a legitimate web site.

Signs that may indicate an e-card is not legitimate:

- Spelling mistakes - e.g. your name is misspelled
- The sender is not someone that you know
- Errors in the message – e.g. it says that you sent a card, not received one
- A URL that appears odd – e.g. www.http:// rather than http://www

How to avoid the dangers of fake e-cards:

- If in doubt, don’t open it. Delete any e-card from someone you don’t know. In fact, never click on anything from an unknown source or open an attachment from an unknown source.
- Never click to accept terms from any e-card company without reading the fine print. One common e-card scam asks users to accept the “Terms”, which actually gives the company permission to access the user’s address book and forward a message to everyone in it.
- Use antivirus software and keep it up to date.
- Use reputable, well-known e-card companies, such as: Blue Mountain, Hallmark, Egreetings and American Greetings