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# Group recognized for efforts to thwart Nigerian email scams

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An email group consisting of mostly private organizations and individuals, along with some U.S. law enforcement agencies, was recognized Tuesday for its efforts to combat so-called Nigerian email scams.

The email list, which includes U.S. federal agencies and prominent cybersecurity firms, is known as the Business Email Compromise (BEC) List and includes more than 530 participants. It was recognized by the Messaging, Malware and Mobile Anti-Abuse Working Group (M3AAWG) with the 2018 JD Falk Award on Tuesday.

The annual award is given to a project that both seeks to protect the internet and "embodies a spirit of volunteerism and community building," according to a release.

The list founder Ronnie Tokazowski, a senior malware analyst for the security firm Flashpoint, first created the project about three years ago to fight against the email schemes, often referred to as Nigerian scams.

The fraudulent emails often use phishing or malware to target victims. Members of the BEC list have helped track the different kinds of malware being used as well as the paths of the scams themselves.

Participating members who agreed to identify themselves include security firms like CrowdStrike, Symantec and Trend Micro, as well as the IRS, Duke University and the FBI. Others involved in the efforts elected to remain anonymous.

"It takes a diverse set of perspectives and expertise to address business compromise email and it's not something researchers, law enforcement, and especially the targeted users can tackle on their own," Tokazowski said in a statement. "I like to describe it as, 'it's not my problem, it's not your problem, it's a problem for everyone in the industry.' We have to come together to fix it and understand how it works."

U.S. law enforcement have also cracked down on fraudulent email schemes. Seventy-four people were arrested over the plots in June, with 42 of the individuals located in the United States and 29 others in Nigeria.

TAGS NIGERIAN EMAIL HACKERS CYBER



**THE HILL 1625 K STREET, NW SUITE 900 WASHINGTON DC 20006 | 202-628-8500 TEL | 202-628-8503 FAX**  
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