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Campus community encouraged to be wary of online scams

Oakland University law enforcement officials and technology experts are warning the campus community to be wary of Internet scams after one student was nearly cheated in an online transaction.

The Oakland University Police Department was notified after a student attempting to sell a computer had prepared the item to be shipped via the U.S. Post Office. The sale, conducted by way of the Craig's List Web site, was to a purported buyer in Nigeria.

OU Mail Services has learned through Post Office representatives that anything of value being shipped to Nigeria will be scanned due to the significant potential of a scam.

In this case, the purported Nigerian buyer offered to pay more than seller was asking if the seller would simply supply a tracking number. Fortunately, the Post Office noticed the unusual circumstances and saved the student from the potential loss of the computer.

"We know the Internet has made buying and selling items more convenient and efficient than ever, but we also know that it's also created a whole new world of opportunity for scammers," said OUPD Chief Samuel Lucido.

"If you're going to buy and sell on the Internet, it's best to stay informed about potential scams and to always trust your instincts when something about a transaction just doesn't seem right."

Experts advise those selling items online to beware of buyers who:

- live very far away, such as overseas
- offer to pay more than the selling price
- propose any transaction arrangements that seem unusual
- ask the seller to wire funds to them
- ask the seller for personal financial information
- refuse to meet in person to complete the transaction

SUMMARY

University law enforcement officials and technology experts provide tips after one student was nearly cheated in an online transaction.

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