



CRIME ALERT

2019-002

Carnegie Mellon University Police has learned that several male students have recently been lured into online blackmail schemes demanding payment to prevent the release of sensitive videos/photographs.

The reported incidents follow the same pattern. Male students are initially contacted via social media, such as Facebook, by a suspect purporting to be a female romantically interested in them. In some cases, the victims are sent explicit photos by the suspect. After a brief conversation, the victims are then asked to continue the conversations via Skype or Facebook Messenger. The victims then are encouraged to remove their clothes and/or perform sexual acts in view of the camera. Afterward, an unknown person contacts the victim, claiming to have recorded the event, and demanding money to prevent the release of the recording. Some of the victims were told the video would be posted on social media and/or sent to friends and family if payment was not made. These incidents are similar in nature to a series of scams perpetuated at a number of universities, including CMU in 2016.

We are urging you to be careful about your online activities and to be skeptical of requests to perform acts on camera. Remember, once photos or videos are made available to others via the internet, it may be difficult to prevent disclosure and dissemination of the content.

Anyone experiencing this type of incident, or with information related to them, is asked to contact CMU Police at 412-268-2323 and/or the Office of Title IX Initiatives at 412-268-7125. Reports will be handled discreetly.

Sincerely,

Tom Ogden
Chief of University Police