



Association of Contingency Planners Vulnerability Alert No. 1

From: ACP Corporate Information Director
February 29, 2008

Disclaimer

This Vulnerability Alert is not the result of an ACP Membership List breach but the result of internet mining and searching by sales organizations for information you yourself have posted to the internet that identifies you as an ACP Member. You might want to consider removing your contact information from those social sites.

Overview

LinkedIn search can provide a list of ACP members and their contact information. The list can be used for telemarketing or email advertisements.

Description

The last week in February, a Board member of the Liberty Valley Chapter was contacted by a telemarketer for the purposes of marketing their company's business continuity service. The telemarketer explained to the ACP member that her company had an 'ACP list' and she was calling through the list. Immediately there was concern on the part of the ACP member because the Chapter membership list is confidential and only available to members of the Chapter. Compounding the ACP member's concern was that the telemarketer was calling from a company who has an employee with an active membership in ACP.

References:

Member agreement to access the information within the Members Portal of Liberty Valley site is:

"The sharing of information on this page or giving access to this page to non-ACP members is considered a violation by the ACP Code of Ethics. The downloading of information from this page for non-members is strictly prohibited."

Code of Ethics (excerpt)

"Use the ACP membership list for Association business only and not furnish the membership list to non-members without the written permission of the ACP Corporate Board of Directors;"

Actions Taken:

1. The issue was reported to ACP.
2. ACP contacted an executive officer of the telemarketer's company and requested that they immediately cease the use of the 'ACP list' until it could be determined if the list was either the Liberty Valley Chapter Membership List, downloaded from the Members Portal, or the information was obtained from another source.
3. The executive officer of the company researched the source of their information and reported that the information on their 'ACP list' was out of their Salesforce.com application taken directly from the search engine in LinkedIn.
4. A test of the search engine in LinkedIn was conducted by the ACP Corporate Information Director with the following results:

Using basic search capability of the LinkedIn site:

Advanced Search

Search Results

We found 111 users in your network matching your criteria.

• Keywords: ACP • Sorted by: keyword relevance

[▸ refine search results](#)

Impact

LinkedIn is an online business networking site, connection of almost 20 million experienced professionals from over 150 countries. The purpose behind this network is to find people, per LinkedIn's CEO. Many companies are taking advantage of LinkedIn, as well as other business networking sites, gathering names for marketing purposes, including 'cold calling', such as the call to a Liberty Valley member this past week. You may receive a call from a telemarketer selling their services to an 'ACP list'. That list may or may not be an ACP Membership List.

Be Aware

1. When you join an online network, your contact information is available to anyone searching the internet, with some limitation for non-members of the network, and some ability to make that information private.
2. Within a business network such as LinkedIn, you will be able to search the database for any information not marked private. And, if you belong to a specific group within the business network, anyone in that group can pull your information for marketing purposes. The ACP Code of Ethics cannot be enforced.
3. The contact information will enable telemarketers to contact you directly and identify to you that they are using an 'ACP list'.
4. If you receive an unsolicited call you will have no way of knowing if the caller is using a confidential list from ACP or a list created from a business network such as LinkedIn.

Solution

It is suggested that if you receive a call from a telemarketer that your response should be:

- a. "ACP does not allow the use of their membership contact information for the purposes of marketing services or products. I do not know if you are using an 'ACP list' from our confidential membership information or if you created the list from another source. I will report this contact to ACP Corporate."
- b. Contact the info@acp-international.com and report the following information:
 - i. Name of company
 - ii. Location of company
 - iii. Name of telemarketer
 - iv. Any information you can gather about the 'ACP list' the telemarketing is using

It is suggested that you give serious consideration before joining an internet business network. Here is an excerpt from a special report about what Gartner analysts reported in December 2007:

"Many companies are thinking about how they can take advantage of social-networking technology, but analysts at Gartner are warning against getting caught up in the hype. Businesses are advised to consider certain issues before investing in or developing internal social-networking tools. These include protecting personal intellectual property, as well as people's preference for using existing nonprofessional, external networks such as [Bebo](#), [Facebook](#) and [MySpace.com](#).

Earlier this month (December 2007), the business networking site LinkedIn also said it will [let third parties develop applications for its site](#) and take LinkedIn content to other sites." Tim Ferguson, Silicon.com, Special to CNET News.com; Published: December 15, 2007