

## HOW PREFERRED IT GROUP SAVED CHRISTMAS

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**Merry Christmas to all, and to  
all a good night!**



Twas the night before Christmas and all were asleep, except for the elves in Santa's workshop who are Preferred Care Elite. The elves were busy stuffing the sleigh, when Santa shouted out loud, "Mayday! Mayday!" The elves all ran around frantic, thinking to themselves this has to be just another one of his antics. "My server is down" he said with a frown, "I must call Preferred IT Group to get my list found."

The technician on call was well on his way, fixing Santa's server so he could take off in his sleigh. "Santa, no need to fear your naughty and nice list is in the cloud from this year." Santa thanked the technician greatly and was filled with cheer, "the kids will be excited for all their presents this year!" The elves were relieved that Preferred IT Group had them covered, even on Christmas Eve! They all shouted aloud "thank goodness we backed up to the cloud!"

Santa jumped in his sleigh with his reindeer in rows ready to follow that big red nose. The snow filled the magical night as Santa shouted out, "Now Dasher! Now Dancer! Now, Prancer and Vixen! On, Comet! On, Cupid! On, Donner and Blitzen! To the top of the porch! To the top of the wall! Now dash away! Dash away! Dash away all!"

This is the story of how Preferred IT Group saved Christmas. Would you know who to call if your server went down? Give us a call today to find out how we can cover your business!

# 12 SCAMS OF CHRISTMAS



With the holidays quickly approaching, make sure you're on the look out for scammers looking to take away a bit of that holiday cheer! Here are a few of the scams going around this holiday season.

## 1. Fake Shipping Notifications

A lot of holiday shoppers do the bulk of their buying online. Scammers are creating false emails alongside the real ones—just hoping you don't notice. Once a consumer clicks on one, a variety of things can go wrong. Consumers should make sure to check tracking numbers, read previous emails before opening, and look for scammer grammar.

## 2. E-Cards

Thousands of people mail cards to loved ones during the holiday season. Some are going high-tech, sending e-cards instead. E-cards are becoming another way that scammers can get your information. There are three questions you can ask yourself to determine if an e-card offer is a scam. Is the sender's name visible? Are you being asked to enter your personal information to open the card? Does this email look suspicious?

## 3. Letters From Santa

Millions of kids write a letter to Santa as a tradition. However, this could be a chance for scammers to acquire unsuspecting parents' personal information. A lot of legitimate businesses do offer personalized letters from Santa, but scammers are only looking for your information. Here are a few things you can do: Be suspicious of unsolicited emails. Look for special prices or packages for the letters from Santa. Do your research to verify a company offering a letter.

## 4. Grandparent Scams

Scammers are known to target seniors, but during the holidays it can become a more prevalent issue. Scammers pose as a grandchild who needs help. They will claim they have been in an accident, hospitalized or even arrested. They will then ask the grandparent for money right away. Here are a few things you can do to prevent falling victim to this scam: Call the family member in question. Check-in with other family members. Never wire money or send gift cards.

## 5. Phony Charities

Consumers tend to open their checkbooks to give back to charities during the holidays. Scammers are hoping to make the most from that generosity. Here are a few things you can do to spot these phony charities: Look for sound-alike names. Verify charity at Give.org. Review the charity donation plan.

## 6. Temporary Holiday Jobs

Lots of consumers look to make extra money during the holiday season. Temporary holiday job searches are just another thing scammers are hoping to take advantage of. In order to avoid a temporary holiday job scam, consumers should: Apply for the job in person. Go directly to the retailer's website. Never give personal information over the phone. Don't pay for anything upfront.

## 7. Unusual Forms of Payment

A lot of people head to social media to find the best deals. Specialty shops often target people with ads on social media during the holidays. You'll know it's a scam when they ask you for untraditional forms of payment. Here are some things you can look for: Stay away from anyone asking for payment in prepaid debit cards, wire transfers or payment apps like Venmo. Those purchases often can't be undone.

## 8. Free Gift Cards

A lot of people give gift cards as a present to loved ones, but scammers are hoping shoppers will fall for this 'free gift card' scam. They will use a pop-up ad to lure consumers in. If you enter your personal information online it can lead to identity theft. Here's what you can do to avoid being a victim: Never open the email, as it could be a phishing attempt. Don't share any personal information to receive the card. Do not click on the ad. Close out of the program. Turn on your ad blocker.

## 9. Social Media Gift Exchange

This scam is considered a pyramid scheme. It's called the 'Social Media Gift Exchange'. The idea is when one person purchases a gift and gets several in return. This scam is illegal. Here are a few things to remember: This scam is referred to as the 'Secret Sister Scam'. Never give out your personal info: (telephone number, address, etc.) It's a ploy to steal your identity.

## 10. Puppy Scams

A lot of families like to give their kids a new puppy for Christmas and scammers take advantage of it. It's called a 'Puppy Scam', and it's an international scam. Families that fall victim to this one are usually looking for a specific breed. Here's how to avoid a puppy scam: Shop around. Check with a few local breeders. Always pay with a credit card.

## 11. Travel Scams

Traveling during the holiday season can get expensive. Consumers should be wary of an offer that seems too good to be true. There are a few things consumers can do to avoid travel scams. Be cautious about email offers. Never wire money to a stranger. Ask for travel references.

## 12. Look-Alike Websites

A lot of consumers will notice look-alike websites popping up this season. They usually come in the form of an email alert, promoting what seems like a great deal. These websites also allow scammers to download malware onto your computers. Always make sure to review the sender's address, look for misspellings and only enter sensitive information into a website that begins with 'HTTPS'.

# BEFORE THE BREACH

HACKERS ARE HERE!

NEW SKILLS FOR A NEW FIGHT

- 1 in 5 businesses will suffer a cyber breach this year
- 81% of all breaches happen to small/medium sized businesses
- 66% of companies do NOT test their backups
- 60% of companies that lose their data will go out of business within 6 months
- 92% of malware is delivered via email
- 97% of breaches could have been prevented with today's technology

Want to learn more about how to protect your business?

Stay tuned for our next lunch and learn!



## PREFERRED IT EMPLOYEE SPOTLIGHT



Meet Carter Baker! Carter has been with Preferred IT Group since 2014! He has a Bachelor of Science in Computer Information Management from WGU. He has been in the IT industry since 1996. He is currently A+, Project+, and Microsoft Cloud certified. Carter also has two college credits in Star Trek related classes!

Carter enjoys playing World of Warcraft in his free time. He is our Trekkie in an office full of Star Wars Troopers. Carter also beta tests video games for fun. He is married and has a 10 year old son.

By the end of next year, Carter hopes to be a Microsoft Azure Expert!



December 2019

## Holly is Back!

We received a very special package in the mail, all the way from the North Pole! Our elf Holly decided she wanted to come back to see us this holiday season! She sure does like to stir up some mischief around the office when she comes!



## MICROSOFT - END OF LIFE

### End-of-Support 2020: Start Planning & Budgeting

	Windows 7	 NO SECURITY
	Server 2008	 NO UPDATES
	Exchange 2010	 NO COMPLIANCE

There is one month left until Microsoft deems Windows 7, Server 2008, and Exchange and Office 2010 end of life on January 14th, 2020. Are your systems updated and ready for the change?

If it is important that your business be up to date and protected from virus, malware, and cybercriminals, call us today to find out how we can help!

If it's not important, well.....we wish you the best of luck!

preferred   
group

## CONTACT US



Fort Wayne  
260.440.7377  
Columbia City  
260.213.4266

Warsaw  
574.306.4288  
Indianapolis  
317.426.8180



[www.preferreditgroup.com](http://www.preferreditgroup.com)



6333 Constitution Drive  
Fort Wayne, IN 46804

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