Valentine's Day
Phishing Attacks

It's important to keep in mind today the fact that heartless con artists use social engineering tactics to trick people looking for love. The FBI's Internet Crime Complaint Center warns every year that Scammers use poetry, flowers, and other gifts to reel in victims, the entire time declaring their "undying love." These hardened criminals – who also troll social media sites and chat rooms in search of romantic casualties – usually claim to be Americans traveling or working abroad. In reality, they often live overseas, and it's a whole industry with planned criminal campaigns focused on days like this.

There are many Valentine's Day scams, but the most prevalent are phony florists, online dating scams, false Valentine's Day electronic greeting cards and delivery scams. These days, organized cybercriminals create full malicious florist websites, or send you an email claiming to be from a local florist with a great deal (just click here!) to save big on flowers.

Fake electronic greeting cards can be filled with malware, and if you click on the link to open the card, you will infect your computer or another electronic device with malware that will steal your personal information and use it to make you a victim of identity theft.

Another current Valentine's Day delivery email scam is about the provision of a gift basket of wine and flowers. However, the person bringing the gift basket requests five dollars or less as a fee to be paid by credit card because alcohol is being delivered. When you fill out the online form, the scammer runs up charges on your credit card.

There are many ways these online criminals try to trick you, but these are the most common. And while a lot of these scams are geared towards a particular victim demographic, anyone who decides to do something special for their significant other could potentially stumble across one of these scams without even realizing it. So, here are the red flags you need to look out for:

Do not trust emails or advertising from online florists or other gift retailers until you are sure that they are valid. Otherwise, you might be turning over your credit card information to a scammer or infect your computer with malicious software.

Do not trust an online greeting card, particularly if it does not indicate who sent it to you. Be very wary of a card sent by "a secret admirer." Even if you recognize the name, confirm that it was actually sent from that person before you click on the link and open the card.

Do not trust special deliveries. There is no particular charge for alcohol, so if someone requires a credit card payment for such a delivery, just politely decline to know you just dodged a bullet.

Do not trust anyone who indicates he or she is in love with you and then wants to communicate with you right away on an email account outside of the dating site, claiming to be working abroad, asking for your address, and using poor grammar which is often a sign of a foreign romance scammer. Many romance scams originate in Eastern Europe.

The rule still applies: THINK before you click.

Source: https://www.infiniwiz.com/scam-of-the-week-valentines-day-phishing-attacks/

11 Tips For Ditching Doomscrolling
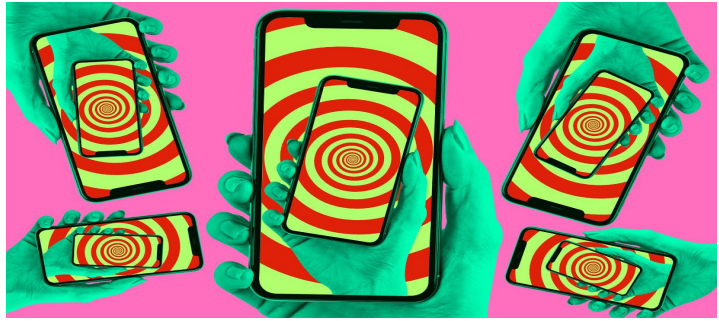
While the act of continuously scrolling through social media or surfing the web and taking in a constant torrent of bad news isn't really new, it's gotten new attention during the pandemic and even a new name: doomscrolling.

Chances are, at some point, you've found yourself doing this, an unending scroll in the harsh light of your smartphone or computer screen. Whether it's Facebook or Google or any number of other places, you're subjecting yourself to a constant stream of terrible news. But, surprise, doomscrolling isn't good for your mental health for a variety of reasons.

It's not all doom and gloom, though. There are ways you can give yourself distance and reduce the urge to dive into the social media abyss, says Dr. Albers. And she has ways you can gently alter your behavior so that you can make sure you set up healthier patterns of mindfulness and news consumption.

1. Localize the behavior
"Localizing means limiting a behavior to a specific time or place," says Dr. Albers. It's okay that you need to read some news to stay informed, but by setting these boundaries and sticking to them,you're channeling behavior into more appropriate or specific time periods that are more ideal.

2. Use Mindfulness
"Be mindful of how a particular article makes you feel as you are scrolling by it," Dr. Albers suggests. "Notice or observe the sensations in your body or your mind's response to the news."

3. Avoid "catastrophizing"
"Catastrophizing" is when your mind jumps straight to the worst-case scenario. "Often, these thoughts are possible but not really probable," Dr. Albers says. "You're mind is jumping right from A to Z." Instead, she says, reel your thoughts back in by asking yourself what is a more realistic or likely outcome of the situation you're reading about.

4. Practice thought stopping
Thought stopping is a cognitive-behavioral technique typically used for ending obsessive or anxious thoughts. "When you have difficulty turning off a thought, imagine a red stop sign," suggest Dr. Albers. "The power of imagination is helpful in curbing your thinking."

5. Slow the scroll

If you can't stop the scrolling, consider slowing down the pace. "The human attention span is very short," Dr. Albers points out. "When we scroll quickly, we continue to shorten the length of time. You need a solid attention span to help you concentrate and focus. Consciously tell yourself, to 'pace, don't race' through the articles."

6. Mantras
When the news is dismal, it can lead you to feel hopeless and down. Hang positive mantras, sayings and slogans in your workspace or around your home. These words help to keep your mind pointed in a positive direction.

7. Focus on the now
"We can't control what is going to happen in the future," Dr. Albers says. "But you can control what is happening right now. Ask yourself what is going to help you to feel better in this moment."

8. Radical honesty
Be honest with yourself about what's at the root of your scrolling. Are you looking for reassurance? Guidance? Confirming your fears? If you are feeling lonely, a more lasting and healing intervention would be to connect with someone.

9. Digital wellness apps
While technology is part of the problem with doomscrolling, it can still be part of the solution thanks to a variety of wellness apps that are currently available. "Set time limits on apps or set alarms on your phone to set boundaries on the time you spend on social media sites," Dr. Albers suggests.

10. Look at the big picture
Sometimes looking at the news can be a positive and give you perspective. "Your own problems seem more manageable or not as difficult compared to some of the things you are reading about in the news," Dr. Albers says.

11. Disconnect
Unhook yourself from your screen by mindful movement. Exercise and deep breaths help to reconnect you with your body and gives your mind a rest while exercising your muscles. Exercise has also been shown to help pump up your serotonin level, that feel-good neurotransmitter in your brain.

Source: https://health.clevelandclinic.org/

If you use any of these Chrome extensions, delete them right now!

Chrome is the most popular browser on the planet by a wide margin, but thanks to third-party extensions, the Chrome browser on your computer probably doesn't look anything like the one on your neighbor's computer. Personalization is one of the many features that Google's browser offers, but the problem with the Chrome Web Store — which is where all of the themes and extensions are made available — is that it isn't nearly secure enough. An insightful piece from CPO Magazine last month discussed the strides that Google has made in keeping users safe from malicious extensions, but some still sneak through the cracks. Facebook actually made users aware of four such extensions by filing a lawsuit against a Portugal business called Oink and Stuff for distributing extensions it claims "were malicious and contained hidden computer code that functioned like spyware."
These are the extensions Facebook cited in its blog post, so delete them immediately if you have them installed:

• Web for Instagram plus DM
• Blue Messenger
• Emoji keyboard
• Green Messenger

It's unclear how many users actually installed any of these extensions, but the apps in question appear to have been removed from the Google Web Store.

MEET OUR NEW EMPLOYEE BROOKES COURTS

Meet Preferred IT Group's newest employee Brookes! Brookes chose the IT field to seek a career that offers the opportunity to keep learning as the years go by. Before Brookes went into IT, he was a Geospatial Analyst in the United States Airforce!

Brookes lives in Fort Wayne with his wife, dog and three cats. He is currently working towards his private pilots license. In addition to flying, he enjoys playing guitar, reading books and playing video games.

Welcome to the team Brookes!
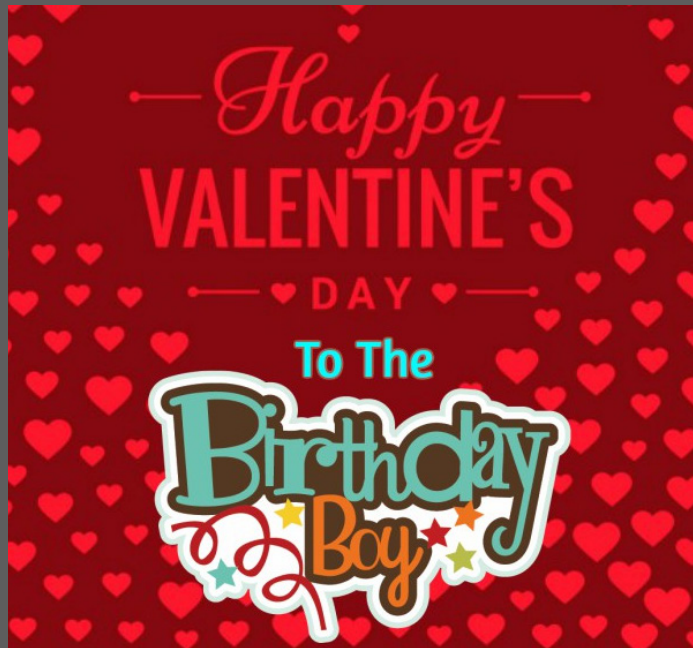
Wishing a Happy Valentine's Day AND a Happy Birthday to our CEO Jason Horne this month!

FUN FACT!

Colonel Sanders was from Indiana, not Kentucky. The American businessman, Colonel Harland David Sanders, was born in the small town of Henryville.

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