

Targeted Attacks.

There's a new threat emerging on the internet, which has seen a 50,000% increase this year. At the moment it's not huge, but it's certainly heading that way.

Hackers have been trying to infect computer systems for some years using spam. The idea is that by offering something you want, they can get you to open their file or visit their website, which will then infect your machine and allow them to do what they want.

We've seen the "phishing" emails doing the rounds for some time; the usual format is something along the lines of "There's a problem with your Royal Bank Of Scotland account. Click here to sort it out." Most of us know it's a scam as we don't bank there; and most of their customers will be savvy enough to think twice before clicking, however for every few thousand emails sent they may just find a willing victim.

In an attempt to increase their success rate the bad guys have started customizing and personalising their messages. So they'll send you an email claiming to be from your bank rather than one you've never heard of. They'll perhaps mention your postcode, or address, or something else which makes you think "that *must* be genuine, otherwise how do they know that?"

They obtain this information from the web, primarily social networking sites such as MySpace, Facebook, friendsreunited, etc. Now, no-one is quite so foolish to put all their information on the web; but we put a bit here, a bit there, and it's quite easy to join up the dots and get a pretty good image of the victim's background.

So I gave myself 90 minutes in which to obtain enough information on one of the members of staff here, using no prior knowledge, to launch a targeted attack. The names of the innocent have been changed. Here's how it works.

We want to attack "Little Productions Ltd" so we start at their website

littleproductions.co.uk

Tells us to contact Frank Spencer, fspencer@littleproductions.co.uk

(When we asked "Frank" what we'd find about him on the web, he said "m called Frank, I'm 41 and I live in Thetford. That's all.")

Myspace.com

Myspace search for Little Productions Ltd finds a Frank who works there, but there's no guarantee it's the same Frank, except a friend calls him Mr. Spencer - so we know it's the right chap. He's using the pseudonym Bigcat35, but that doesn't show up anywhere else on google.

We know he was born between 21st March and 20th April (he gives his star-sign as Aries); he was 41 when he last updated his profile this autumn... so we've narrowed his date of birth down to 21/03/1966 – 20/04/1966.

He lives in Thetford. He shows us nice pictures of his wife and kids. His eldest, or at least tallest, son is named as Jacob, and there's a picture of him in school uniform – www.schoolswebdirectory.co.uk tell us that there are 6 primary schools in Thetford, and Jacob appears to be in the uniform of St. Justins (Head teacher Mark Johnston, email office@st-justins.norfolk.sch.uk)

Frank's wife is referred to as "DB" but her picture, captioned "my gorgeous wife," matches that of his first friend "Deborah," so now we know his wife is Mrs. Deborah (B?) Spencer. She tells us she's 41 too, using the pseudonym TippexGirl.

Frank tells us he's worked at Little Productions since 1990; so does one of his friends Richard Parker, whose Myspace tells us he earns less than £30,000pa and that has his own webpage

at richardparker.com, on which there's a blog... Although this blog never mentions Little Productions by name, it does name the company's IT Manager as Dave and their Ops Manager as Stephanie. It's a shame about the computer problems they experienced in August '05 – it must have been bad; they sent most of the company home. Unfortunately he doesn't tell us much about the computer systems they're using at Little Productions. There are some nice pictures of his colleagues and his manager. Oh, and LP's CEO Derek doesn't like to be beaten at Snooker.

Frank leads worship at his local church, part of the God's Big Family movement.... According to the God's Big Family webpage they have a church in Thetford, and they in turn have a website... on which there are pictures of Franks Myspace friends "Mad Sam", "Pete", and "Janet". We've obviously got the right church when we read Pete's Myspace to read that he's the church leader, and his hero is "Frank Spencer, our worship leader". Pete has a wife Kim, kids John, Nathan and George. God's Big Family in Thetford meet at 10am on a Sunday

Frank tells us he has a series-5 Smithson guitar (which specialguitars.com values at around £3,700) an ipaq, video ipod, sat-nav, and a company laptop (Little Productions appear to use Dell laptops, so if there's a known vulnerability there, we could exploit that) which is supported by Dave, who we already know is IT manager. "...and a Dell laptop (thanks Little Pro) supported by Dave, thanks Dave..."

[Friendsreunited.com](#)

Search for Little Productions in "England, UK" and we find Frank Spencer who says he's worked there since 1990.

His younger son is named as Isaac, and when the undated entry was written the boys were 5 and 3 1/2 . Jacob's picture caption tells us his birthdate, 05/02/01 (ahhh, pretty baby picture) and so Isaac was born in the summer of '02.

Now we're told where Frank grew up, 23 Wellington Road, Rowley. Google tells me that's in Stafford. Royal Mail's postcode finder gives me the postcode ST23 1HD) Googleearth would give me a nice aerial shot if I wanted... He has two sisters, Jane and Joanne.

We know which schools he went to and when –

Rising Brooke Junior and Infant School, which multimap.com tells me was 5 minutes walk from home, and he left here in 1977 – confirming the summer '66 birthdate; and then he went to Rowley Park Comprehensive slightly further from home at 17 minutes, which he left '82... so he didn't stay on to get A-levels!

A search at the public records office in Stafford could give me his exact date of birth and mother's maiden name. Wonder where he banks...

Little Productions has another location listed on friendsreunited, "Norwich, UK". Their webpage tells us that they're based in Norwich.

Sharon Marriner worked there 1991 – 1992, Samantha Gould 1996 – 1998 and Henry Harris 2004 – present. According to LP's website (thanks to google) Henry deals with Media contacts at Little Productions.

Samantha has moved to Scotland since leaving the East Anglia area.

[118118.com](#)

There's only one F Spencer listed in Thetford - Tel: 01999 8234213 and they live at 52 Springbok Drive, Thetford, Norfolk NF23 4KS. No guarantee that's the right F Spencer, but a double-glazing market research call could easily verify that. Now - he goes to church at 10am on Sunday; bet he takes his guitar to lead worship – but he won't need the sat-nav (it's less than a mile, according to multimap) laptop, ipod.... If we weren't nice dishonest hackers but, err, otherwise motivated, we could use a line like "Hi Jacob, Mummy asked me to give you a lift to the church office to meet her and Pastor Pete. Daddy's really sorry, but he's tied up at work in Norwich. You look just like your photo aunty Jane showed me..."

[MediaMegalith.com](#)

The "May 07" suppliers information podcast at www.mediamegalith.com/info/podcasts includes a six-minute interview with "Frank Spencer of Little Productions, who knows all there

is to know about small production suites” in which he confirms he’s worked at LP for 17 years, confirming the 1990 start date. We notice that he has no sign of a Stafford accent, but does lisp a little.

Genesreunited.com

A Frank Spencer born 1966 in Stafford appears in a tree belonging to “Joanne” (his sister’s name) I could create a (fictitious) tree, put him and his sisters in it and ask Joanne to link our trees up (that’s the point of the site) which gives me his mother’s maiden name. Of course, I’d need to sound plausible – how about “Hi, trying to track down Frank, Jane and Joanne; think they’re second cousins or some such. The family lost touch with Frank when he left Rowley Park Comp (must have been, oh ’82 I guess) the last address we had was Wellington Road, Rowely - we found an old Christmas card list – but Gran can’t remember any more! Is this the right Frank?”

Facebook.com

Has a group entitled “I Produced for Little Productions” for all those who’ve worked there. It’s a private group, so I’ll have to be accepted. It’s moderated by a certain Henry Harris...

Remember Sharon Marriner? Friendsreunited has her listed as Sharon Chandler. It appears she changed her name to Chandler following her divorce, and works in media training in Poole. She’s moved around a bit since leaving LP. She changed her name from Chandler to Marriner some time between joining Miniproduct in ’85 and leaving LP in ’92 (I guess she got married.) Henry Harris worked at Miniproduct too – but he didn’t join until 2001 so he won’t have met her...

So we take a picture of Sharon from one of her web entries, create a fake facebook profile including loads of her school friends and work colleagues (we can get all that from freindsreunited)

“Sharon Chandler: Hi, I’d like to join “I produced for Little Productions.” I left in, oh, must be 1992 (that’s AGES ago – I feel so OLD!) but of course that was before I divorced and went back to my maiden name – I wonder if anyone there will still remember Sharon Marriner? Is that Frank Spencer still there?”

If I’m accepted then there are pictures of the staff and management at that rather boozy Christmas party last year, with each person cleverly named. Of course though, I would be accepted ‘cos Henry doesn’t know Sharon from Adam – but if he checks HR records he’ll see her there; more likely he’ll check with someone who worked at Little Productions in ’91 or ’92. Perhaps the photo will trigger Frank’s memory...

From this information we can compile a profile of Little Productions Ltd. We have enough to begin a plausible attack on Frank (“Hi I’m calling from your bank – obviously I can’t identify it for security reasons, but I can tell you that your mother’s maiden name is Johnston, you were born in Stafford and your postcode is NF23 4KS... Could you give me letter 5 of your password?”) on his family and on Little Productions, who would think we’ve been in contact with Frank for 16 years and so the file we just sent their CEO will be opened without question...