The Virgin Islands Consortium

48 USVI Residents Reported To The FBI That They Were Victims Of Internet Fraud In 2017

Crime / **Published On May 14, 2018 10:45 AM /**

Ernice Gilbert May 14, 2018

Forty-eight U.S. Virgin Islanders in 2017 reported to the Federal Bureau of Investigation's (F.B.I.) Internet Crime Complaint Center (IC3) that they were victims of an internet crime, according the F.B.I.'s latest Internet Crime Report. The IC3 said 2017 was a record year for it, revealing that as of October 12, 2017, it had received its 4 millionth consumer internet crime complaint for that year.

The most used tactics by internet criminals in 2017, according to the report, were non-payment/non delivery, with a total of 80,079 reports; personal data breach which had a total of 30,904 reports, and phishing with 25,344 reports.

The top three crime types with the highest reported loss were business email compromise (B.E.C.), confidence/romance fraud, and non-payment/non-delivery.

B.E.C. is a sophisticated scam targeting businesses that often work with foreign suppliers and/or businesses and regularly perform wire transfer payments, according to the F.B.I. A romance scam is a confidence trick involving insincere romantic intentions towards a victim, gaining their affection, and then using that goodwill to commit fraud. And non-delivery is a scheme most often linked to Internet auction fraud, in which a seller on an Internet auction website accepts payment for an item yet intentionally fails to ship it. Sellers like these sometimes will relist the item and attempt to sell it again through a different username.

The state on the list with the most defrauded individuals was California, which had 41,974 victims. The U.S. Virgin Islands came in at 55 on the list with 48 victims.

Total loss for all victims in 2017 was more than $1 billion, according to the F.B.I.

Loss by age group shows the elderly being hit the hardest, with those in the over 60 bracket amounting to 49,523 victims or the equivalent of $342,531,971. Victims in the 50-59 age bracket numbered 43,764 for a total loss of $275,621,946; those in the 40-49 bracket amounted to 44,878 for a total loss of $244,561,364; those in the 30-39 bracket amounted to 45,458 people for a total loss of $156,287,698; those in the 20-29 age group amounted to 41,132 individuals for a total loss of $67,981,630; and those under 20 amounting to 9,053 individuals for a total loss of $8,271,311, according to the F.B.I.

Other techniques used by internet fraudsters include ransomware, which is a form of malware targeting both human and technical weaknesses in an effort to make critical data and/or systems inaccessible; tech support fraud, which is a widespread scam in which criminals claim to provide customer, security, or technical support in an effort to defraud unwitting individuals and gain access to the individuals' devices; and extortion, which occurs when a criminal demands something of value from a victim by threatening physical or financial harm or the release of sensitive data.

To report an internet crime, go here. See the full 2017 report here.