

# NEWS RELEASE

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For Immediate Release  
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## ATTORNEY GENERAL'S OFFICE AND DEPARTMENT OF TECHNOLOGY AND INFORMATION WARN OF INTERNET TSUNAMI RELIEF SCAMS

Dover - The Department of Technology and Information (DTI) in conjunction with Delaware's Attorney General's Office issues a warning to all Delawareans regarding computer scams, spam and fraud related to the tsunami disaster in South Asia.

"It is tragic and unfortunate that unscrupulous people are using the tsunami disaster for purposes of fraud," said Delaware's CIO, Thomas Jarrett. "We want to be certain that our citizens do not fall prey to fraudulent websites masquerading as charitable organizations or spam promising the sharing of bank accounts of relatives in affected countries."

Internet tsunami relief fraud is appearing in two primary ways. The first is fraudulent disaster relief websites that appear to be legitimate charitable organizations. The second method is spam, unsolicited email sent to a person's computer mailbox. This unsolicited email scam is referred to as advance fee fraud, and centers around trying to solicit money from individuals by promising to share large bank accounts of supposedly dead relatives from the affected countries. The person receiving the email is asked to provide bank account numbers in order to receive money.

The Attorney General's Office advises Delawareans to beware of Tsunami Disaster Solicitations that may not be from legitimate charities. Con artists may use sound-alike names, resembling well-known charities, or look-alike websites or e-mails

masquerading as legitimate charities. It is best to never give out your personal financial information in response to a telephone solicitation or e-mail. Contact the charity yourself or physically type in a charity's website instead of clicking on a link. Avoid cash donations and make checks payable to the organization, not an individual. Lastly, if donating by credit card, never type your credit card or bank account number into an e-mail.

DTI suggests that citizens carefully research any tsunami relief donation sites in order to avoid these Internet scams. One source for independent verification of charities is GuideStar.org. ( <http://GuideStar.org> ) GuideStar includes listings of those charitable groups that have registered with and met the guidelines of the U.S. Internal Revenue Service's terms for a nonprofit charity. DTI further advises Delawareans never to reply to any unsolicited or unfamiliar email address.

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