



## OFFICE OF INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY

### Topic 5: Email Hoaxes and Scams

Did you hear a story about a major software development company that is giving \$100 to anyone that will forward their announcement email to everyone in their address book? Did you hear the one about a major beverage company that has a screen saver with frogs on it that crashes your system when you install it? If you did, **do not believe them**. These are hoaxes and scams!

Many hoaxes come in the form of a warning about a virus that can "delete your hard drive" or something similar and the message will often tell you to contact everyone in your address book to warn them. These hoaxes are so common that both of the major anti-virus software vendors have created web pages that track and report the latest hoaxes.

One of the most prevalent email scams being spread today is one that states "You can be a millionaire" by forwarding the email to others and be paid a certain amount of money for each email sent. Millions of people fall prey to these scams. The authors of these hoax and scam emails are often seeking notoriety by getting their email forwarded to as many people as possible.

An easy way of spotting a hoax or scam is the inclusion of an attachment. Just as trustworthy sites will not ask for personal information in an email, trustworthy people or companies will not send you an attachment with instructions to use it to "remove an infected file from your computer." It can't be stressed enough: **Never open an attachment from someone you don't know, or an unexpected attachment from someone that you do.**

Remember: if it sounds too good to be true, it probably is. If the email states that it is tracking how many people it is forwarded to, it's a scam. Email cannot be tracked in this manner. The best way to stop hoaxes and scams is to educate yourself about them. You can look it up on one of the many sites devoted to detailing the current known hoaxes and scams. Education is the biggest key to successfully eliminating this Internet pest. **Stop the spread of email scams and hoaxes!**

ROOM 70-406

JOHN A. KENNY HALL

TUSKEGEE UNIVERSITY

TUSKEGEE, AL 36088

TELEPHONE:

334-727-8111

EMAIL:

AGEORGE@TUSKEGEE.EDU

[www.tuskegee.edu](http://www.tuskegee.edu)