

Phishing increases on campus, harms student email

BY KINSEY DANZIS
STAFF WRITER

"You are hereby required to reply to this email with your webmail account username and password —"

Stop right there.

If you have received this email from the "Guilford Helpdesk," one of the senders of suspicious emails circulating campus right now, you are not required to do anything of the sort. In fact, you should not — unless you want to undermine the security of your email account and whatever personal information is within it.

So far, over 260 Guilford College accounts have been hacked this semester alone, and that number is still rising.

Phishing, as this type of hacking is called, involves asking people directly for their account information rather than trying to break into their email.

"It takes too long to break encryption and passwords," said Chief Information Officer Craig Gray. "It's just easier to trick people into giving you the username and password."

Such trickery has always existed at Guilford, but now we are in the midst of a spike. Phishing attempts are up about 60 percent from last semester, and students are feeling the heat.

"The phishing at Guilford is atrocious," said Trey Woodlief, an Early College junior whose account was hacked from Nigeria through a supposed "Helpdesk" requirement. "The sheer amount of emails coming through leaves the college, as a whole, vulnerable."

There is no single motivation to phish. Some may hack thousands of emails and sell them to others who will use any number of them for black market purchases or under-the-table deals, while another hacker might just use them for spamming.

"It's a new semester, and there's a new group of people who get email accounts that didn't exist before," said Associate Professor of Philosophy Vance Ricks, who currently



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teaches a course on computer ethics. "That's several hundred new opportunities to compromise someone's account."

Guilford is a small college compared to many others in the nation, so if several hundred new emails are created each year, imagine how many the larger institutions must have. That adds up to a lot of potential targets for phishers, and it creates a big issue on campuses.

"Even though just a small percentage of the Guilford population is getting hacked, that doesn't make it any less of a problem," said senior Sarah Mehta, who has received

multiple hacking emails since last year. "Email accounts are one thing, but what if these people can somehow access even more personal information?"

For the Guilford IT&S department, it is a fight to keep up with the constant increase of hacked accounts and prevent consequences, such as identity theft and blacklisting.

"Security is a constant struggle," said Gray. "We're constantly trying to strike balance between the freedom of people to use the technology they want to use with the need for security."

Sadly, there is only so much they can do

aside from educating the community about the signs and dangers of phishing. What it all boils down to is that it is important to be cautious when giving out personal information online, even through an email that may or may not be secure.

"It's important to listen to that still, small voice, as the Quakers say, that tells you that there's something just a little off about this message," said Ricks. "If you're not sure, then what's the harm in waiting an extra 10 minutes or even an extra day before replying to an email or click on a link?"

After all, it is better to be safe than sorry.

Alumna teaches business, hairdressing skills to fight Cambodian sex trade

BY ANNA OATES
STAFF WRITER

"An estimated 30,000 Cambodian women have been trafficked into forced labor in neighboring Asian countries," U.N. Inter-Agency Project on Human Trafficking reports.

And that number is rising.

However, Shaina Machlus '09 is trying to help fight this injustice with her work through The Trade Foundation.

This unique foundation pairs two things that normally are not associated with one another: hair and the sex trade.

Since graduating from Guilford College, Machlus has helped women in Cambodia escape the sex trade by teaching them the necessary skills to become successful hairdressers.

Most of these women are forced into the sex trade. Whether through extreme impoverished conditions or abuse, sex traffickers exploit these women and deprive them of their free will.

Some women believe prostitution is their only option to bring in enough money to survive. Some are even sold into the sex trade by their own families.

"Most of us grow up hearing that we can be whatever we want to be," Machlus said to News & Record. "Most of them had never heard that. So the dynamic of choice was really powerful."

In a culture where so much is based on looks, the choice to learn hairdressing can bring in enough financially to be a life-changer for women in Cambodia.

"People get their hair done every day, including women in the sex

trade," Machlus said to News & Record. "There were three to four salons on every block."

Hair skills are not the only thing these women are being offered.

According to The Trade Foundation's mission statement, students are also educated on how to run a small business and bring positive contributions to their surrounding communities.

"I really want to put power in peoples' hands, and let them shape what it becomes," Machlus said to News & Record.

Machlus has made great strides towards this, both with her work in Cambodia and her work with the Interactive Resource Center in Greensboro, where she offers haircuts to the homeless.

"She is what I would consider an ideal Guilford student: thoughtful, kind, politically conscious,

culturally sensitive and aware, generous in spirit and loving," said Associate Professor of English and Department Chair Diya Abdo, who also gets her hair done by Machlus.

Associate Professor of Justice and Policy Studies Sherry Giles also takes pride in Machlus' post-Guilford achievements.

"I'm happy to see a Guilford alumna doing this work that hews so closely to the college's core values," said Giles.

Machlus plans to return to Cambodia this February to continue her work through The Trade Foundation.

"For everything I taught, I also gained," Machlus said to News & Record. "The important parts of teaching, in addition to skills and job training tools, are the emotional tools and emotional support you give."

Machlus' work not only frees these women from the sex trade but also gives them a sense of power and control over their own lives.

"Empowering women is incredibly important, in any culture," said Abdo.

"(Machlus' work) certainly helps to create the conditions for women to develop the power to choose how they earn their living," Giles said.

Machlus found the women she worked with had a lot to offer the world.

"I saw that first day that they were talented, artistic, intelligent and deserved to be treated as professionals," Machlus said to News & Record.

As The Trade Foundation says on their site: "Education is the only lasting solution."