

Cognitive Dissonance Persuasion in Smishing

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Abstract

Smishing is a phishing attack that operates in a mobile environment and rely on social engineering utilizing persuasive communication to manipulate users. Mobile devices present a unique, personal, and inherently trustworthy environment where users habitually respond to text messages immediately. This immediacy allows social engineering to effectively exploit human cognitive and psychological vulnerabilities to increase phishing susceptibility, underscoring the need for dedicated smishing research. This research introduces the Cognitive Dissonance Persuasion (CDP) framework for smishing, integrating Persuasion Theory and Cognitive Dissonance Theory (CDT) to examine how persuasive techniques in messages interact with human cognitive and psychological vulnerabilities and influence smishing susceptibility. This research contributes to expanding cybersecurity behavioral research in smishing and establishing a persuasion-based paradigm for understanding human vulnerability.