



Headline: War against online scams  
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# War against online scams

POSTERS and banners alerting the public on phone and online scams are a common sight in Beijing, especially at financial institutions.

This is an effort of the Chinese government to raise awareness so that its citizens do not to fall prey to such fraud, losing hundreds of millions of renminbi annually.

Bank employees have been very cautious about such illegal activity.

Every time I transfer rental to my landlord, I have to sign a document, confirming that the recipient is someone known to me and I have to write down my particulars and the purpose of the transaction.

Then, before processing, as part of the standard operating procedure, the bank employee would read out a long note from her notepad and make sure that "I knew what I was doing".

This is how careful they are to help protect the hard-earned money of innocent people.

A big thumbs up to them although the procedure could be annoying, resulting in me losing patience sometimes, especially when rushing to get things done.

Despite the SOP in place, phone and online fraud are still rampant in the mainland as technology has taken over people's lives, despite its stringent laws and strict enforce-

ment in combating crime. With the Chinese government coming down hard on online scams, fraudsters are moving their bases overseas.

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One of the most effective ways to counter this problem is to raise the people's awareness, apart from beefing up the enforcement operations.

But this does not mean the authorities are turning a blind eye.

They have also been working round the clock, doing all they can in the battle against online fraud.

This has resulted in the fraudsters moving their bases overseas.

Last week, the Malaysian Immigration Department scored big in a series of operations with the arrest of nearly 900 Chinese nationals in Cyberjaya, Melaka and Sabah.

The suspects were believed to be involved in online scams, targeting their own countrymen.

More than 9,250 cellphone, 250 laptops and 800 desktops were seized from the raids.

The Chinese Foreign Affairs Ministry sent out a stern warning to its citizens abroad, reminding them to abide by the local laws.

"We support the Malaysian side in the lawful operation in fighting crime," said its spokesman Geng

Shuang in responding to the Cyberjaya arrests.

The Chinese police launched a special campaign against telecom and online scams from June to October.

China's Public Security vice-minister Du Hangwei announced that the cops cracked 94,000 cases in the operations.

He said police also busted 491 groups involving "unfreezing national assets" - a scam in duping the people into believing that they could unfreeze the national assets by paying a small price, reported Xinhua.

The cops also crippled 2,981 groups offering fraudulent loans, he added.

Telecom and online scams come in all sort of forms, from job search, e-shopping or with the fraudsters pretending to be the cops, bank officers or government officials.

Just recently, a job seeker revealed to the local media that he received numerous phone calls from companies that offered him handsome salaries, after submitting his resume to an online recruitment agent.

But to secure the job, he has to download some "fishy apps".

"They seemed to know a lot about me including my name and home address," he added.

And this leads to another major issue faced in the IT era - the leakage of personal data.

Back in Malaysia, I was very annoyed to receive calls from unknown individuals offering insurance scheme, loans, telecommunication packages and other services, but in China, this is even worse because of the wide usage of technology.

Some of the apps including shared bike service required real name identification with users uploading their identity cards or passports to the respective companies. Many other apps including news platforms required permission to make and manage phone calls, obtain users' locations, photo album, storage and others.

At many restaurants, the waiters and waitresses do not take orders anymore because customers can place them online by scanning the QR code on the tables.

And most of the time, one would need to follow the restaurants' official accounts on WeChat or give access to your personal data.

I rejected them all.

If you do not take my order by hand, I would go to another eatery and even till now, I still pay with cash if the apps require me to grant access to my information.

The Chinese authorities are fully aware of this and have started reviewing the laws and are brainstorming for effective solutions against this.

As of October, the public security teams have busted more than 45,000 cybercrimes with the arrest of over 60,000 suspects as part of the efforts to clean up the Internet.

Most of the cases related to illegal infringement of personal information, hacking, online gambling and fraud.

The country has the most Internet users (829 million, equivalent to almost 60% of its 1.4 billion population) worldwide, according to China Internet Network Information Center.