



NEWS RELEASE

Are You an Easy Target for Income Tax Fraud?

*Free March 9 “Hacking the Human” Webinar to Provide Tips for
Deterring Cyber Thieves*

PHOENIX, Ariz. (March 2, 2017) – Tax season is in full swing, which means cyber thieves are lurking online, ready to fool you with any number of phishing scams, password breaches and other deceptive activities in order to compromise your Social Security number.

In 2015, the Internal Revenue Service (IRS) experienced its largest hack, when cyber criminals gained access to [more than 700,000 IRS accounts](#).

“They hit the jackpot,” said Michael Cocanower, founder and president of Phoenix-based itSynergy. “By gaining access to Social Security numbers, birth dates and other private, protected information, they were setting themselves up to file fake returns and collect refunds.”

Cocanower, who has been recognized nationally and locally for his IT expertise, conducts a free, monthly 15-minute webinar series, “Hacking the Human,” on the second Thursday of every month. The next topic on Thursday, March 9 covers Avoiding Income Tax Fraud. Interested participants should register at <http://www.itsynergy.com/webinar> prior to the start of the webinar at 11:30 a.m.

“The IRS will never contact you via email, so never click on a link or open an attachment that appears to come from them,” Cocanower said. “In addition, it’s important to be careful about how you are sharing tax documents. For example, a cyber thief can easily intercept the tax documents you are emailing your tax professional.”

The “Hacking the Human” webinars are geared towards non-technical end users in business at any level in the company. Each webinar provides useful tips to ward off cyberattacks and more complex social engineering schemes that result in theft and corporate espionage.

More webinars are planned after March 9, including:

April 13 – Social Engineering

Social engineering is the technique bad guys use that causes you to extend an open invitation to them to hack you. Think you would never do such a thing? You’d be surprised at some of the techniques thieves use and how successful they are. Michael Cocanower will share several common social engineering techniques and teach you how to recognize and avoid them. You’ll leave with a whole new perspective on the world...

May 11 – Summer Vacation Tips

Kids just about out of school? Time to gas up the car and head out on the open road for the iconic summer vacation? Before everyone piles into the car, spend 15 minutes to learn about keeping yourself, your family, and your technology safe during summer vacation. Michael Cocanower will cover things like protecting your privacy, getting Internet access while traveling, and what to watch out

for as you travel. So before heading out, make sure to get a tune-up, check your brakes, and attend this webinar to make sure your technology runs just as reliably as anything else!

June 8 – Protecting Your Electronic Assets

More and more, the most valuable thing a company has is no longer physical, like machinery or buildings, but it is their information, including documents, spreadsheets, PDF files and more. If that information were to fall in the wrong hands, it could be potentially disastrous for an organization. Learn some of the latest technologies available to help you maintain control of your data even when it leaves your organization. Want to be able to revoke access to a file you emailed to someone? Want to allow them to open the file but not print it? Want to keep them from copying and pasting the data to a file they control? All possible and relatively easy to do with the right tools – register today to learn more.

For more information, call itSynergy at (602) 297-2400 or visit www.itsynergy.com.

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About Michael Cocanower, Founder and President of itSynergy

He has his black belt in the Kung Sul division of Hwa Rang Do, a Korean martial art, so it's fitting that Michael Cocanower's passion is helping small and medium-sized businesses defend themselves against malicious cyber intruders. A Phoenix native, Cocanower founded itSynergy in 1997, and under his leadership, the company has experienced exponential revenue growth. A long-standing Microsoft Partner, itSynergy provides strategic technology management services for small and mid-sized organizations on a fixed monthly fee. Cocanower has received numerous awards and widespread industry recognition throughout his career, including being named one of 20/20 Visionaries in *Channel Pro Network* magazine's May 2016 issue. The magazine regularly turns to him for input on current IT trends, and called him a "shrewd and articulate observer of the SMB market." In addition, the Arizona chapter of Entrepreneurs' Organization (EO) recently appointed Cocanower to the board of directors as membership chair.

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