

## ID fraudsters pose as online businesses

### Bogus exchange listing scam

By John Leyden

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Identity fraudsters are targeting online businesses in a new scam featuring an online trading exchange.

Access Business Communications (abc), a Scottish business telecoms retailer, was recently targeted by fraudsters on Alibaba.com, a reputable website that brings together suppliers and buyers of products made in China.

The scam came to light after abc discovered bogus profiles in the name of "Access Business Communications Ltd" and "Freedom Mobiles", (the consumer brand of the company) on Alibaba.com. The rogue profiles touted offers for high value products such as mobile phones, laptops and plasma screen televisions. The name of abc (along with its phone number and address) were included in these profiles to add legitimacy to bogus listings.

"We became aware of this when we started receiving calls and emails at our office for a "Kate Miles" and a "Ben Marton" who have never worked for us," abc managing director Scott Allison said.

The conmen posing as abc sought to convince marks to send money by Western Union transfer for goods they will never receive.

"What has happened here is that these fraudsters have chosen to impersonate us for the same reasons that our customers choose to buy from us: we are a long established company with a successful six year trading history and have an excellent reputation behind us," Allison added.

abc has contacted alibaba.com to get the bogus profiles removed, and has taken steps to remove some additional company information from their own websites, such as the VAT number, which only needs to appear on invoices.

"I had always thought that the more information about us we could put on our own websites the better. However, it's not just customers that can see this information it's criminals like these as well. I would urge any small business to be vigilant to this type of criminal activity and act swiftly if you become aware of this happening to you."

At the time of writing, the suspicious listings remained live on Alibaba.com. The trading site has yet to respond to our requests for comment. ®