

## CYBER BLACKMAIL

Cyber blackmail is a growing attack vector used to scare the recipient of the associated email. Here is what you need to know about cyber blackmail:

1. This email will tell you that your password is *passwordexample*.
2. The password is actually a password you have used at one time or another.
3. The password has most likely been sold on the Dark Web as a part of a large password database acquired through a data breach.
4. The email will almost always say that the hacker knows what inappropriate sites you have visited and will share this information with friends, family, supervisors, co-workers, etc.
5. The hacker might even list a site or two in order to incite a bit of panic on your part.
6. Proceed by doing the following.
  - a. DO NOT reply to the email.
  - b. Change your password if you are still using it for ANY account!
  - c. Remember that you need unique passwords for all accounts you use. Not only is this the best way to keep your accounts secured, it also helps identify the account that was associated with the password, especially if you are still using it.
  - d. Forward the email to [abuse@utk.edu](mailto:abuse@utk.edu), include the Internet headers using the Reporting Phishing instructions below and cc: [sandy@tennessee.edu](mailto:sandy@tennessee.edu).
  - e. Normally you should delete the email after forwarding it but this is one time you should hold to it, just in case there is any kind of follow up by the hacker.
  - f. If you hear from the hacker more than once, please contact the Institute's CISO immediately.

Please remember that this is a scare tactic. If you have not been visiting the types of sites mentioned, the hacker is just trying to create panic and embarrassment in hopes of making some money from you or the thousands of others they have emailed.

### References:

[UTIA Glossary of Information Technology Terms](#)  
[Reporting Phishing Attempts](#)

For more information, contact Sandy Lindsey, CISO, at (865) 974-7292, or email [sandy@tennessee.edu](mailto:sandy@tennessee.edu).