

Beware of this Domain Appraisal Scam.

I recently received several e mails from domain sellers who had fallen victim to a domain appraisal scam. The scam starts with a mail the seller receives concerning a domain they own and the scammer showing interest in buying it. The scammers find information about their targets on Ebay and on Whois.

In the first mail they tell you that they are a new player wanting to invest money in the domain market as a side business and inquire how much you want for the domain.

Next step is the mail in which they accept your asking price for the domain. The scammers tell you that they want you to get the domain appraised as they don't want to make a bad investment. The scammers want the appraisal from a certain manual appraisal website, which they believe to be a good one ofcourse this appraisal website is part of the scam. This appraisal website gives a highly inflated appraisal value and asks a high fee for it (up to over a hundred dollars) as they know you need the appraisal to sell the domain.

The end of this story is that once you have mailed your appraisal you never hear from your buyers again. leaving you one hundred dollars poorer and an absolutely useless appraisal richer. This is a very cunningly operated scam and to show you how such a scam mail looks i give you a real example of such an email below.

Email 1:

Hello,
We 've found your domain name listed for sale..
If you are still interested in selling please send your quote and I will consider it with my partners.
Main direction of our business is software development and technical support.
Domain names is not our business but a new way to earn on reselling. We are going to buy domains to resell them at higher prices since we have a large database of clients interested in good domains.
Looking forward to do business with you.
Regards,

Email 2:

You want 13,500 USD. Ok.
Do you sell domain with a web site or just the name?
If it's just the name it's ok. A web site is not necessary.
Have you had your domains appraised already? Can you show me your valuation certificates? As far as I know it's a common practice to show appraisal of domain name (even without traffic and web site) before doing business.
Without an appraisal I risk to overpay. In other words I won't be able to make a profit on reselling this name. It's very important for you and me to know the current market value of your domains.

Of course, we must be sure that you are engaging an appraisal company with REAL manual service. I heard many appraisal companies often made inaccurate auto-generated appraisals. I will only accept appraisals from independent sources I trust. To avoid mistakes I asked domain experts about reputable appraisal companies in a forum. (they now give you a link of a forum you have to check out)
Just check this posting.

If the appraisal comes higher you can adjust your asking price accordingly. I also hope you can give me 10 discount of the appraised value.
After I get an appraisal from you we'll continue our negotiations.
How do you prefer to get paid: Escrow.com, PayPal.com check or wire?
Hope we can come to an agreement fast.
Looking forward to your reply.

So if you ever get an email like this, you know what to do. Scrap it. Just remember this wise saying that if something sounds too good to be true it

probably is.

About the Author

Brian Holland works as a moderator for GoogleGoogle.net and gets first hand information on new trends and scams on the web.

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