

Fake websites, non-existent resorts, holiday prize scams and pop up deals – all to be avoided as you make your online bookings

MELBOURNE, 15 May 2012 – With winter drawing close and thoughts drifting to skiing holidays or warmer climes, AVG (AU/NZ) Pty Ltd, the distributor of the award-winning AVG Internet and mobile security software in Australia, New Zealand and South Pacific, reminds holiday makers to be vigilant against Internet scams and fraudulent travel websites as they make their online bookings. Tourism Research Australia, via the Australian Government's Stay Smart Online initiative, reports that more and more Australians are taking advantage of online specials and the ability to make late flight changes and other arrangements without visiting a travel agency.

Michael McKinnon, Security Advisor at AVG (AU/NZ), said: "It makes perfect sense – finding your holidays online can be significantly cheaper, you aren't locked in to any given provider, and you can do it at the click of a mouse button or swipe of the touch-screen. But as you also hand over name, credit card and sometimes date of birth details the dangers are obvious."

Online crime is driven by volume so when a particular type of activity grows, such as holiday period travel bookings, the cybercriminals follow. AVG (AU/NZ) is detecting a new raft of phishing scams aimed at travel websites and email lists. There are fake sites; email offers for non-existent resorts and packages; operators that don't provide secure payment pages; and phone competition scams offering tempting luxury holidays.

AVG (AU/NZ)'s safe online holiday booking tips are:

Be wary of pop ups and unsolicited emails. Once you begin searching you could be distracted by pop up deals and start to receive emails from bogus sources. Don't click and don't open unless the messages are from a trusted source. Use reputable travel organisations that have industry credentials such as AFTA. If you haven't used the site before, do a Google search on the company to check its bona fides. Check on small private operators by giving them a call before you place an online deposit. Read the terms and conditions covering refunds, booking changes, deposits and balance due. And if it is an international booking, check which currency you will be making the payment in. Any time you are entering personal or financial details, look for the security signs: a padlock symbol in your browser or payment pages that begin with "https://". The "s" denotes security. As always, the first step to search, surf and email safely is to use a full online protection suite such as AVG Internet Security, or if you use an Android tablet or smartphone, AVG Mobilation.

ENDS

For the series of informative security tips, how-to and fact sheets see:

www.avg.com.au/resources/security-tips/. For video tips from AVG (AU/NZ), see: www.youtube.com/user/avgaunz

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Based in Melbourne, AVG (AU/NZ) Pty Ltd, an Avalanche Technology Group company, distributes the AVG Internet Security and Mobile Security product range in Australia, New Zealand and the South Pacific.

AVG's mission is to simplify, optimise and secure the Internet experience, providing peace of mind to a connected world. AVG's powerful yet easy-to-use software and online services put users in control of their Internet experience. By choosing AVG's software and services, users become part of a trusted global community that benefits from inherent network effects, mutual protection and support. AVG has grown its user base to approximately 108 million active users as of December 31, 2011 and offers a product portfolio that targets the consumer and small business markets and includes Internet security, PC performance optimisation, online backup, mobile security and identity protection.

Talk to Us

Media Contacts:

Michael McKinnon AVG (AU/NZ) 03 9581 0845 mmckinnon@avg.com.au

Shuna Boyd Boyd PR 02 9418 8100 shuna@boydpr.com.au

AVG Technologies – Investor Relations

AnneMarie McCauley

AnneMarie.McCauley@avg.com

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