Trend Micro Unmasks Global "Task Scam" Industry

New research exposes operations behind deceptive digital job platforms and highlights growing financial and psychological harm to victims

DALLAS, Aug. 19, 2025 /PRNewswire/ -- Trend Micro Incorporated (TYO: 4704; TSE: 4704), a global leader in cybersecurity, today released new research revealing the mechanics and scale of a rapidly growing fraud model known as "task scams": sophisticated online job scams that lure victims into repetitive digital tasks and systematically strip them of funds through escalating deposit demands.

To read the full report,* Unmasking Task Scams*, visit:* *https://www.trendmicro.com/vinfo/us/security/news/cybercrime-and-digital-threats/unmasking-task-scams-to-prevent-financial-fallout-from-fraud

Robert McArdle, Director of Forward Threat Research at Trend:"Task scams are now one of the most financially and psychologically damaging cybercrime threats individuals face today. The infrastructure enabling them, from domain registrars to SMS blasting services, requires immediate attention. Meanwhile, organizations can reduce risk by making their recruitment practices transparent and educating job seekers on how to identify legitimate communications."

Trend™ Research uncovers a sprawling global criminal infrastructure that impersonate legitimate companies, exploit trusted communications channels, and prey on job seekers using gamification techniques. Trend reports that scammers are transferring millions via cryptocurrency wallets, with victims losing between hundreds and hundreds of thousands of dollars each.

Modern scam tactics are highly targeted and designed to go undetected. In a recent global study of over 6,500 consumers conducted by Trend, 39% reported becoming aware of being a scam victim only after losing a significant amount of money.

The report includes firsthand engagements with scammers, infrastructure mapping of malicious websites, and forensic analysis of associated cryptocurrency wallets. In one case, a single wallet received over US $187,000 in less than two months. Another wallet was linked to more than US$1.2 million in transactions.

Key findings include:

- Impersonation of real companies including staffing firms and digital marketing agencies.
- Gamified scam platforms with VIP levels, reward streaks, and achievement incentives.
- Widespread use of SMS, WhatsApp, Telegram, and fake websites to establish legitimacy.
- Domain registrations linked to high-risk registrars, with hundreds of lookalike domains identified.
- Cryptocurrency payments that obscure financial trails and facilitate international money laundering.

Victims report a high emotional toll, often describing behaviors akin to gambling addiction. In some cases, task scams are linked to larger criminal operations that include forced scam labor and human trafficking in Southeast Asia, though such ties are not confirmed in every case.

Using Trend Micro ScamCheck with Scam Radar can help users recognize early on when they are being targeted by a scammer. An industry first, Scam Radar offers real-time protection by identifying scam tactics utilized by cybercriminals as they happen, alerting users and empowering them to take action before any harm is done.

The latest version of Trend Micro ScamCheck is available on the Apple App Store and Google Play.

About Trend Micro
Trend Micro, a global cybersecurity leader, helps make the world safe for exchanging digital information. Fueled by decades of security expertise, global threat research, and continuous innovation, Trend Micro's AI-powered cybersecurity platform protects hundreds of thousands of organizations and millions of individuals across clouds, networks, devices, and endpoints. As a leader in cloud and enterprise cybersecurity, Trend's platform delivers a powerful range of advanced threat defense techniques optimized for environments like AWS, Microsoft, and Google, central visibility for better, faster detection and response. With 7,000 employees across 70 countries, Trend Micro enables organizations to simplify and secure their connected world. www.TrendMicro.com.

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