BaitBlock: Measuring and Mitigating Phishing Propagation in YouTube Live Chats

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1 Introduction

1.1 Problem Statement

Live streaming platforms like Twitch and YouTube Live have become breeding grounds for novel phishing and impersonation scams that exploit real-time interactions. Scammers take advantage of streamers' fame and the incredibly fast-paced environment of the chatroom to deceive viewers. Attackers often use cryptocurrency giveaways and/or promotional events to personalize their attacks towards the youth-dominated audience of streaming platforms.

1.2 Motivation and Significance

Recent research shows the alarming scale of this problem. One study, [2], measuring crypto giveaway scams found that scammers converted about 4 in 100,000 live stream views into victims, extracting nearly $4.62 million from just a few hundred people during the study window. Young fans of popular streamers are especially at risk. Scammers create clone accounts or even entire fake live streams to impersonate famous creators and brands. According to [1], a multi-year RiskIQ study revealed how criminals mimicked seven prominent YouTube channels, such as vlogger James Charles and commentator Philip DeFranco, and tricked over 70,000 viewers by sending messages that frame malicious links as giveaway prizes.

1.3 Scope and Project

1.4 Project Outcomes

2 Related Work

2.1 Core Sources

2.2 Identify Gaps

3 Research Plan and Current Status

3.1 Objectives

3.2 Methodological Approach

3.3 Progress to Date

3.4 Next Steps

References

[1] Anthony Cuthbertson. Youtube impersonation scam has tricked 70,000 people, study reveals, January 2019. Available at: https://www.the-independent.com/tech/youtube-scam-impersonation-james-charles-prize-free-gift-riskiq-cyber-security-a8754341.html. Accessed: 2025-11-02.

[2] Enze Liu, George Kappos, Eric Mugnier, Luca Invernizzi, Stefan Savage, David Tao, Kurt Thomas, Geoffrey M. Voelker, and Sarah Meiklejohn. Give and take: An end-to-end investigation of giveaway scam conversion rates. In *Proceedings of the 2024 ACM on Internet Measurement Conference (IMC '24)*, pages 704–712, 2024. arXiv preprint arXiv:2405.09757v1.