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Jan. 22, 2014

In the aftermath of the data breach that potentially exposed the credit and debit card information for 80 million shoppers, Target sent out an official email stating that the company would offer one free year of credit monitoring through Experian.

That email went to customers on January 13, 2014. Now, the copycat scammers are trying their hand at capitalizing on the fears of those who may have had information exposed.

Many consumers are receiving emails that appear as if they are from Target and may even have similar statements about free credit monitoring, but the emails are coming from fake email addresses. The key to avoiding being victimized, say Target officials and internet security experts, is to never give Social Security numbers, personal information or bank account information through email or on a form that was accessed via an email.

A few keys to spotting scam emails:

- Spelling and grammar mistakes
- Urgent “act now” language
- Requesting information or account numbers

The safest way to get to the website of a company is to type the URL directly into the web address bar on your browser, instead of relying on the link in the email, said Al Pascual, an analyst at Javelin Strategy and Research.

The most up-to-date information on the data breach can be accessed at

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