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**September 2016**

## Microsoft phone scam: how it works

[www.pcadvisor.co.uk](http://www.pcadvisor.co.uk)

*(Editor's note: We continue to get phone calls and visits from our users about a phone scam. It is great for our business but it could easily be avoided!)*

The scammer calls you, and asks for you by name. They say they are a computer security expert from Microsoft (or another legitimate tech company or a Microsoft 'partner'). The 'security expert' is plausible and polite, but officious. They say that your PC or laptop has been infected with malware (malicious software), and that they can help you solve the problem. What happens now depends on the particular strain of scam with which you have been targeted.

Some crooks will ask you to give them remote access to your PC or laptop, and then use that access to get hold of your personal data. Others get you to download a tool which they say is the "fix" for your problem, but is actually malware. A more straightforward scam is to simply ask for money in return for a lifetime of 'protection' from the malware they pretend is on your machine.

Microsoft phone scam: what to do if you are called

- 1.1. Put the phone down. Get rid of the caller and move on with your life.
2. During your conversation, don't provide any personal information. This is a good rule for any unsolicited call. And certainly never hand over your credit card or bank details. Just don't do it.

3. If you've got this far, we can only reiterate point number 1: get off the phone. But whatever you do don't allow a stranger to guide you to a certain webpage, or instruct you to change a setting on your PC or download software.

4. If possible get the caller's details. You should certainly report any instance of this scam to Action Fraud.

5. Finally, change any passwords and usernames that could plausibly have been compromised, and run a scan with up-to-date security software. Then ensure that your firewall and antivirus are up to date and protecting your PC.

Oh, and there is a number 6: tell everyone about it. This scam preys on people's insecurity about lack of tech knowledge. It is very easy to be a victim, and the best defence is sharing knowledge. It is much easier to put the phone down if you are forewarned.

## Computer Humor



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P.S.—If you would no longer like to receive an email from Park Place Computers, please reply with your wishes. Thanks!