



**D**ear FANs, since our most recent “Buyers’ Extravaganza” issue, we decided to take a bit of a break in production. This was mainly to recharge our batteries, gather more good content, and , well...to take a little break here at Artemus Central. You see, even OUR elves can use a little respite! We hope that you understand and, with that, we welcome you to our 22nd issue of Artemus Consulting Group’s “FANs Weekly Summary”! We hope that this finds you all well and preparing for the holidays. Here at Artemus Central, our bellies are still reeling from our Thanksgiving meals but preparing for friends and family to come once again! Welcome back, dear friends...and here we go with issue #22!



## WE HAVE A WINNAH!

(ACTUALLY, WE HAVE TWO OF ‘EM!)

Remember way back when we send oh, so many requests for articles, websites, etc. from you? Yeah, I know you remember that. Actually,



you probably remember being hounded for that stuff! Well, our friend and FAN, David Simpson, sweetened the deal by offering his invention, “Bug-In-A-Box” to the winners of the “FANs Weekly Summary Contribution Contest”. First off, we thank David so very much for his generosity and

for making our little contest easier to pull off. We thank all of our contributors. We had nine FANs contribute articles that they found to be of substance and potential interest to the rest of the FAN population. Those nine FANs contributed a total of 23 articles which found their way to our communique!

This issue is no different, either! We have three new stories/articles that were contributed in the last two weeks and ones that we think are going to spark your interest as well. “Okay, enough of the banter, who were the winners,” you ask.

Without further ado, we lift the curtain to reveal our 2021 winners:

- Steve Jones
- Steve Page

Interested in seeing what David Simpson’s “Bug-In-A-Book” looks like? That’s easy. Take a look at this video on Vimeo:

<https://vimeo.com/25485317>

“Oh, cool! So how do I win the 2022 “most contributions contest”? Easy peasy, dear FAN:

1. collect your favorite articles (ones that you know would be of interest to FANs)
2. copy down their URLs (if you have ‘em)
3. email the articles and/or URLs to [manny@etsdesigngroup.com](mailto:manny@etsdesigngroup.com)

Each article counts as one entry!

Congratulations to both Steves and thank you for the many contributions for all of us! Now...on to our current set of stories!

# The Worst of the Worst Tax Scams Circulating this Tax Season

contributed by Artemus founder, Bob Wallace

The end of the year is quickly approaching, and so is tax season. In anticipation, the IRS announced its annual "Dirty Dozen" list of the worst tax scams circulating right now. Here's a breakdown of the list and what to be on the lookout for.

## Pandemic-Related Scams

The COVID-19 pandemic and the many corresponding changes to taxes created new opportunities for scammers to take advantage of people. As many of these changes enter into unfamiliar territory for most Americans regarding taxes, it's essential to know what these scammers will target. Here are the main pandemic-related scams to look for:

### Economic Impact Payment Identity Theft

What to look for:

Text messages with links, random incoming phone calls, or emails inquiring about bank information or attempting to verify it

Be alert for mailbox theft

What to do if you suspect a scam:

If you receive any of these scam messages, do not click the links and delete any texts and emails received immediately. If you receive a call, don't give any information, hang up and block the number

Frequently check mail and report any suspected mail losses to the Postal Inspectors Office

The IRS will never contact you via phone, text, email, or social media for personal information. The IRS official website is the only source for information and payment

## Unemployment Fraud

What to look for:

Receiving a Form 1099-G reporting unemployment compensation that you didn't receive or file for

What to do if you suspect fraud:

The IRS urges you to contact your appropriate state agency for a corrected form

Read state-specific information here

## Personal Information Cons

Personal information cons are one of the most common tax scams that circulate every year. It's important to remember that the IRS will never personally contact you via phone, text, email, and will never ask for personal information over any of these platforms. Here are a few of the most common ways these scammers try to get your information:

## Tax-Related Phishing Scams

What to look for:

Any email, text message, website, or social media message that attempts to collect personal information.

Messages regarding large refunds, missing stimulus payments, or issuing a threat.

What to do if you suspect a scam:

Always be cautious of any link sent to you, especially if it claims to be the IRS or someone seeking your financial information. Do not click them, and delete any immediately upon receiving

Do not open any attachments either

## Impersonator Phone Calls

What to look for:

Unexpected phone calls asking for personal information



mation

Phone calls from unknown callers

What to do if you suspect a scam:

If you answer an unexpected call asking for personal information, security experts recommend asking questions but not disclosing any personal information

If in doubt, hang up immediately

Report the call to <https://www.treasury.gov/figta/>

### **Social Media Scams**

What to look for:

Emails, texts, and social media messages from sources impersonating family members and co-workers, usually including a link to something

What to do if you suspect a scam:

Do not open any links in messages sent

Report messages within the social media platform and delete them immediately.

Review privacy settings in your social media (any information that can be viewed on your page can be used by scammers to target you.)

### **Ransomware**

What it is: Ransomware is a form of malicious software that is designed to block access to computer systems and data. These are mainly targeted toward businesses and institutions.

What to look for:

Messages that attempt to get you to download attachments from unknown sources or click links

Pop-up windows with external links on a legitimate website

What to do if you suspect a scam:

Report to IRS immediately

Remain vigilant with regular cyber hygiene checks and cyber security controls

### **Rules Focusing on Unsuspecting Victims**

Unfortunately, many tax scammers purposely prey on specific population groups, such as seniors and those with low English proficiency that may be more susceptible than others. Here are a few scams to be on the lookout for:

#### **Fake Charities**

What to look for:

Requests to contribute to disaster relief funds

Organizations pressuring to give immediately

What to do if you suspect a scam:

Research the charity in question

Verify charity is legitimate using the IRS Tax Exemption Organization Search Tool

#### **Immigrant/Senior Fraud**

What to look for:

Telephone call threatening jail time, deportation, or revoking a driver's license (immigrants)

Any phone call asking for personal information (seniors)

What to do if you suspect a scam:

Remember the IRS will only contact you via mail and will not threaten these things; these are merely scare tactics by the scammer

Fill out the IRS's Schedule LEP document to request all IRS communications to be in your native language

Utilize the revised forms for seniors

#### **Unemployment Insurance Fraud**



What to look for:

Unemployment payments coming from a state other than the state in which the customer reportedly resides/worked

Multiple state unemployment payments are made within the same timeframe

Unemployment payments are made in the name of a person other than the account holder

Numerous deposits or electronic funds transfers are made that indicate unemployment payments from one or more states/account holders

A higher amount of unemployment payments is seen in the same timeframe compared to similar customers/amounts received

What to do if you suspect a scam:

Read state-specific information here

### **Schemes that Persuade Taxpayers into Unscrupulous Actions**

Unscrupulous tax promoters and preparers often execute these tax schemes, disguising them as “deals” that cheat the system. They can be harder to identify because they require you to be familiar with tax rules and not blindly trust the professional advising you.

They all share the common warning signs. A professional attempts to get you a “better deal” using methods that skirt the system. A good rule of thumb for identifying these scams is that if it sounds too good to be true, it probably is.

Some common scams that fall under this category are syndicated conservation easements, abusive micro-capture arrangements, abusive use of the US Malta Tax Treaty, improper claims on business credits, and improper monetized installments. Here are a few scams to be on the lookout for:

#### **Unscrupulous Tax Return Preparers**

What to look for:

Preparers that won't sign returns that they prepare

Preparers requiring cash payment only

Preparers who invent income to qualify their clients for tax credits

Preparers who claim fake deductions to boost the size of the refund

Preparers who direct refunds into their bank account, not the taxpayer's account

What to do if you suspect a scam:

Discontinue all work with the offending professional immediately and select a reputable tax preparer

Familiarize yourself with the qualifications and requirements of tax preparers using the IRS credentials resource

#### **Offer in Compromise (Mills)**

What to look for:

Offers claiming to settle tax debts for “pennies on the dollar”

Promoters claiming they can obtain larger offer settlements

What to do if you suspect a scam:

Use the IRS OIC Pre-Qualifier to see if you're even eligible for the program

Visit the IRS website for details about penalty information rather than a third party

Discontinue all work with the offending professional immediately and select a reputable tax preparer



## What FANs are Buying



**WHAT:** HP OfficeJet Pro 6978 printer

**WHO:** Bob Wallace

**FROM:** Amazon.com (we think!)

Main functions of this HP color inkjet photo printer: copy, scan, fax, wireless printing, two-sided duplex printing and scanning, color touchscreen, automatic document feeder, Instant Ink ready so you'll never run out of ink, and more

**WHAT'S REALLY COOL?** Ink is delivered to your home: get your first 2 months free when you enroll in HP Instant Ink (optional) during printer set up; plans starting at \$2.99 per month after the trial period, shipping and recycling included.

## This Week in the Artemus Website's Artemus Spotlights



[The Internet Is on Fire](#)



[Lots and Lots of Bots: Looking at Botnet Activity in 2021](#)



[Facebook shutting down facial recognition program](#)



[Google issues warning to location-sharing apps](#)



Thanks for reading! We hope that you found this issue to be of interest and look forward to YOUR contributions.