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## How to Use EARNEST Practice

Priming employees to read email defensively is a first step in creating a human sensor network. You can use real email messages received by employees to create a series of examples that allow employees to practice using the self-questioning method, EARNEST.

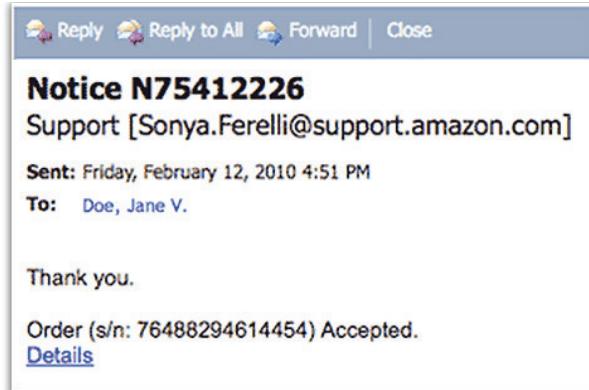
Examples can be presented in several ways: via a story series, interactive self-practice, or an online quiz. We have found that feedback and explanation are necessary components regardless of delivery format.

The remainder of this paper provides an example of how you might create such a practice.

### Template: EARNEST Practice Email

**Story:** You ordered something from Amazon. Within hours or a few days, you receive this message sent to your work email address.

**Your Response:** You were expecting an email from Amazon, but you know you should scrutinize even expected email messages.



Using EARNEST, here's what you discover:

1. **Expected?**

Yes, I was expecting a message from this company. But I ask myself, does this company (or person) have my work email address?

2. **Ambiguous?**

Yes, it wants me to click on a link for more information. Normally, with this company, I don't have to do that.

3. **Relationship?**

Yes, I have done business with Amazon. But I don't believe I have ever seen a personal name associated with an automated message from them. Usually it's just a generic service account address.

4. **Normal?**

No, the wording seems non-standard compared to what I have received from Amazon in the past.

5. **Exposed?**

The link is hidden in the word "Details." I put the mouse over the link to hover and discover that the link does not go to Amazon but to an obviously counterfeit URL: <http://kafka.apl-cutting.com/bad.html>

6. **Sense?**

Amazon normally sends me all the information I need directly in the body of a message and would not ask me to click to find out which order it is referring to. And I already determined in step #5 that this is a phishing attempt.

7. **Time?**

No sense of urgency, although the boldface word "Notice" at the top does suggest action may be required.

**EARNEST outcome:** The email message is suspicious and is, in fact, not legitimate, especially given that it fails the Exposed and Sense checks.