



EXPOSURE MANAGEMENT

Trusted Domains, Fraudulent Numbers: How Travel Support Scams Exploit SEO, PDFs, and AI

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Following our [previous report](#), **Scammers Are Watching Airline Complaints and Posing as Customer Support**, Check Point Exposure Management identified a new, related campaign that targets major airlines, other travel brands, and their customers at mass scale. We uncovered that threat actors are **mass-producing impersonating PDF documents** and text posts that advertise fraudulent customer support, refund, and claims phone numbers for many travel brands. The impersonated brands include major airlines and online travel agency booking websites. They seed this content onto legitimate, high-reputation websites, including US federal, state, county, and city government sites, universities, a European Union site, and commercial platforms such as Lenovo.

The campaign first surfaced through large-scale uploads of these PDFs to antivirus repositories. Our file and hash investigation found that large numbers of PDFs are submitted to antivirus repositories through an API. This indicates the uploads either come from the threat actors themselves, checking whether security products detect their files, or from victims opening the files using a common antivirus API. Using advanced Open Source Intelligence (OSINT) techniques to search the multiple phone numbers advertised inside the documents, we revealed files hosted on websites belonging to legitimate organizations and governments.

The same searches also revealed the numbers being promoted through Instagram and Facebook posts and surfacing in **Meta AI-generated summaries** in Facebook search, including in response to searches for Booking.com customer service numbers. Timezone metadata in a subset of the files and Hindi language artifacts suggest that the threat actors behind the document creation and fraud campaign are Hindi speakers, potentially based in India. The operation is still active. None of the files are detected as malicious by any antivirus engine, because the documents contain no malicious code. Their only weapon is a phone number placed in a deceptive context.

We assess that the threat actors are deliberately exploiting trust at every stage of the campaign. Trusted domains lend the fraudulent documents search engine reputation and credibility, while social media posts and AI-generated summaries amplify the numbers and present them as direct answers to users seeking support. The goal is to make a traveler searching for an airline or travel booking support line more likely to find, trust, and call a phone number the scammers control, and increasingly, to be the number an AI assistant repeats rather than just a search result.

KEY FINDINGS

- **Consistent submission channel, active operation:** all PDFs in the hash investigation were submitted to antivirus repositories through the same API integration. Whether that integration belongs to the threat actors, a tool in their workflow, or a security product submitting files on behalf of many users, including victims, cannot be determined. The channel is confirmed; its owner is undetermined.
- **Industrial scale:** approximately 20 travel brands are targeted, and internal counters in filenames indicate a corpus in the hundreds and likely larger.
- **Trusted hosting without breaches:** the documents are placed on government, university, and commercial websites through public upload forms and user-generated content features.
- **Cross-channel reuse:** the same phone numbers appear across hosted PDFs, commercial blog platforms, Instagram and Facebook posts, and Meta AI summaries.
- **Possible India link:** a +05:30 (India Standard Time) timezone stamp in the jsPDF-generated files and Hindi and Hinglish tokens in filenames suggest Hindi-speaking individuals, potentially based in India.
- **Zero detections:** every file examined scored 0 detections across the antivirus engines in the repositories. The threat is semantic, not technical, so conventional file scanning does not catch it.

BACKGROUND

Our previous report documented scammers impersonating airline customer support and help desk accounts on social media to reach travelers who post complaints about their flights, bookings, and refunds.

The campaign in this report targets the same type of victim through a different channel. Instead of waiting for a traveler to post a public complaint, the scammers try to intercept the traveler at the moment they search online, or ask an AI assistant, for an airline's support or refund contact details.

DISCOVERY

PDF UPLOADS TO ANTIVIRUS REPOSITORIES

We identified large-scale uploads of PDF documents to antivirus repositories. The documents present themselves as airline customer support hotlines, refund claim lines, and help desk contact guides, use the names of major airlines in their titles and content, and are heavily stuffed with search keywords. The documents have been seen written in English, French, and Spanish.

Submission records show that the uploads came through a single API integration rather than through many independent interfaces. This could be the threat actors checking whether security products flag their files, a tool or service in their production workflow that scans files automatically, or a security product that submits files on behalf of many users, including victims who opened the documents. The data does not allow us to determine which. The File and Hash Investigation section details this analysis.

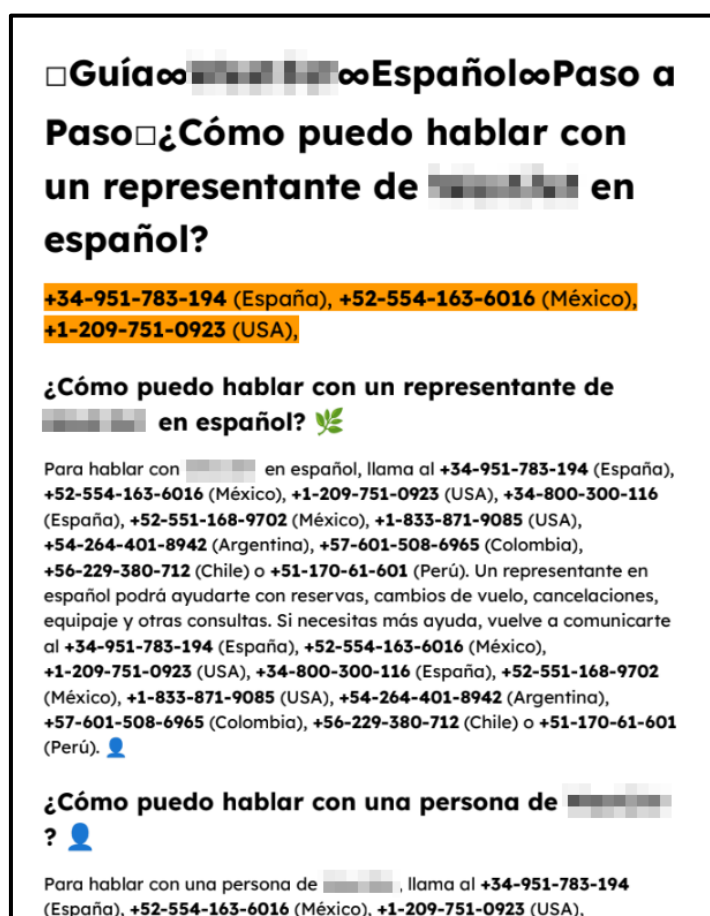


Figure 1: PDF documents uploaded to antivirus repositories, airline name obfuscated

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((FAQ's ✈️ 24/7 Guide)) Complete List of [redacted] airlines Customer Service Phone Numbers in the USA 24/7 Does [redacted] airlines work 24/7?

Yes, [redacted] airlines works 24/7, allowing travelers to book flights US +44-(161)-568-00-19 UK +1-(866)-567-15-10, hotels, and manage reservations anytime through its website or mobile app.

Customer support is also available around the clock —call US +44-(161)-568-00-19 UK

Figure 2: Example document advertising a fake airline customer care line

HOSTED ON LEGITIMATE TRUSTED DOMAINS

Searching for the phone numbers found in these documents returned copies of the same PDFs hosted on legitimate domains and subdomains. These include corporate and government domains that search engines and users typically treat as trustworthy. The table below lists some examples of hosts observed, the mechanism used to place each file, and the brand impersonated.

Host	Sector	Upload mechanism	Brand observed
otc.education.tamu.edu	US university	WordPress, Formidable Forms upload	European Airline
urop.gatech.edu	US university	Drupal, webform upload	American Airline
ctl.gatech.edu	US university	Drupal, webform upload	European Airline
regions-and-cities.europa.eu	EU government	Drupal, webform upload	European Airline
submit.nal.usda.gov	US federal gov	Drupal, files upload	American Airline
cleanla.lacounty.gov	US county gov	WordPress, Fusion Forms upload	American Airline
waterrights.utah.gov	US state gov	Document-submission portal	Chinese Airline
www.nmhu.edu	US university	WordPress, WPForms tmp upload	American Airline
cityofpearidgear.gov	US city gov	WordPress, WPForms tmp upload	American Airline
premiergranitetops.com	Commercial	WordPress, WPJobBoard application upload	American Airline
library.moody.edu	US university	Optimizely/Episerver, contentassets	Chinese Airline

Host	Sector	Upload mechanism	Brand observed
careers.pwd.org	Nonprofit	Drupal, applicant upload	Japanese Airline
igualdadynodiscriminacion.igualdad.gob.es	Spain government	PDF upload	Canadian Airline
chicago.mfa.gov.md	Moldova government (Consulate General in Chicago)	PDF upload (booking-xrtut-t1)	Booking, American
www.tenthrevolution.com	Commercial	/uploads/file	Travel Brand

Table 1: Example of Legitimate hosts observed serving the fraudulent PDFs

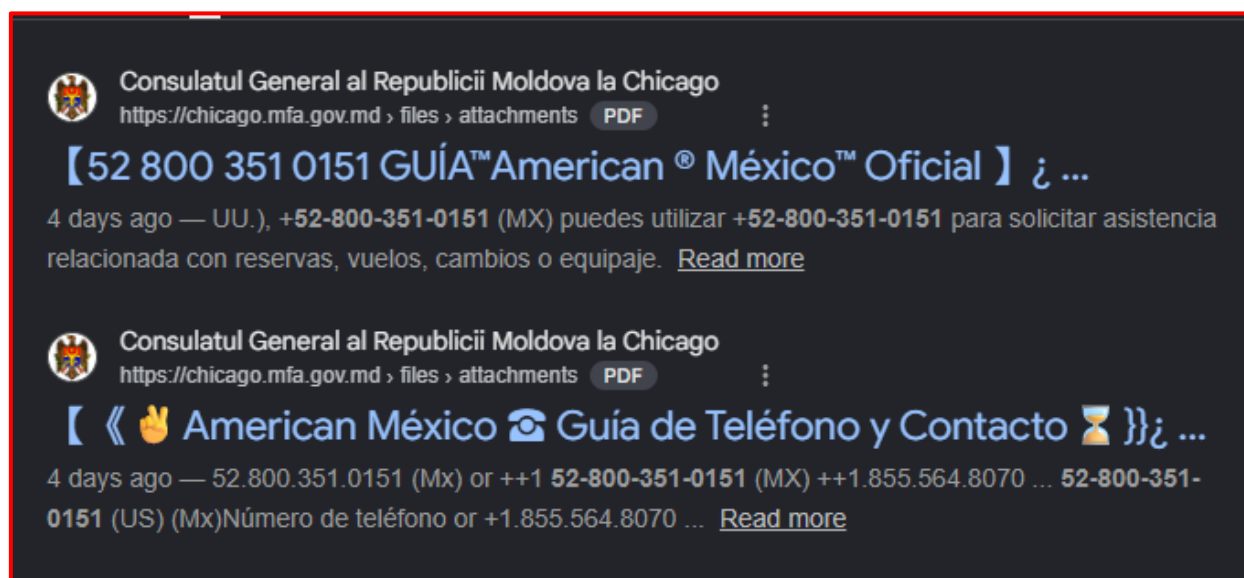


Figure 3: Fraudulent PDFs indexed under the Moldovan Consulate General in Chicago website

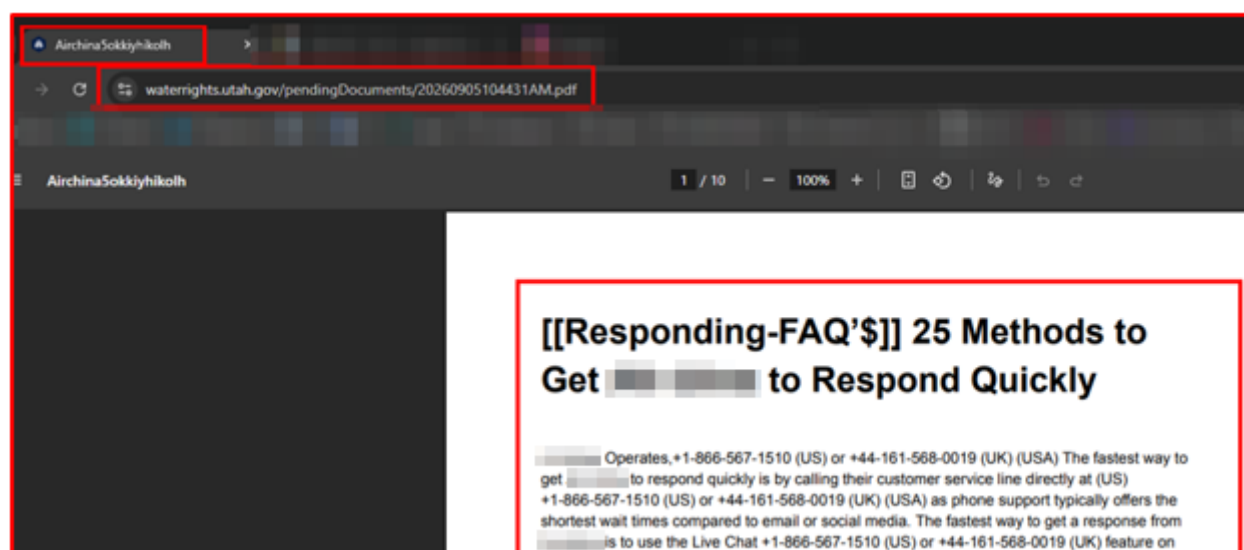


Figure 4: Fraudulent Chinese Airline support PDF served from a Utah state government document portal

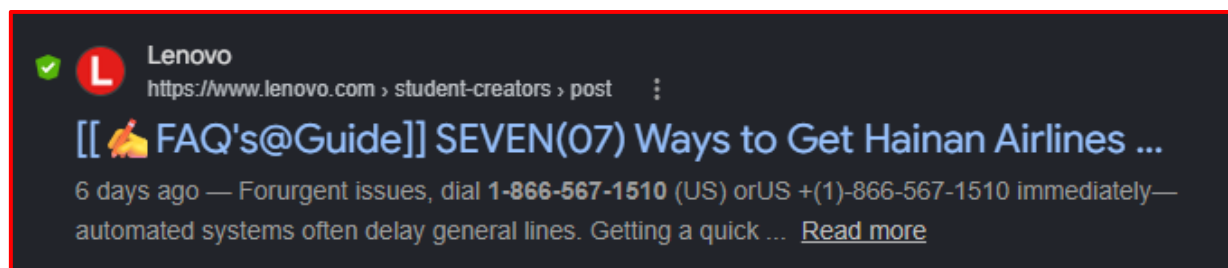


Figure 5: Lenovo creator platform post advertising a fraudulent Hainan Airlines number

Based on the available evidence, the organizations hosting these files are not the source of the scam. They appear to be victims whose public upload features are being abused.

SOCIAL MEDIA AND CONTENT PLATFORMS

Searching the same phone numbers also showed that the scammers are not relying on hosted PDFs alone. In addition to the uploads to legitimate websites, we found the fraudulent numbers being promoted on social media and user-generated content platforms, where they reach users through the platforms' own content and search features.

META ACCOUNTS AND ADVERTISEMENTS

We identified several Instagram pages hosting advertisements that contain the fraudulent phone numbers, presented as customer support or refund contact details. The posts use AI-generated bait imagery and promoted cruise and airline numbers.

We also observed a Facebook page impersonating Booking.com under the name "Booking.com customer complain helpdesk," advertising UK mobile and WhatsApp numbers and a Gmail contact address.



Figures 6: Instagram post advertising fraudulent customer support numbers

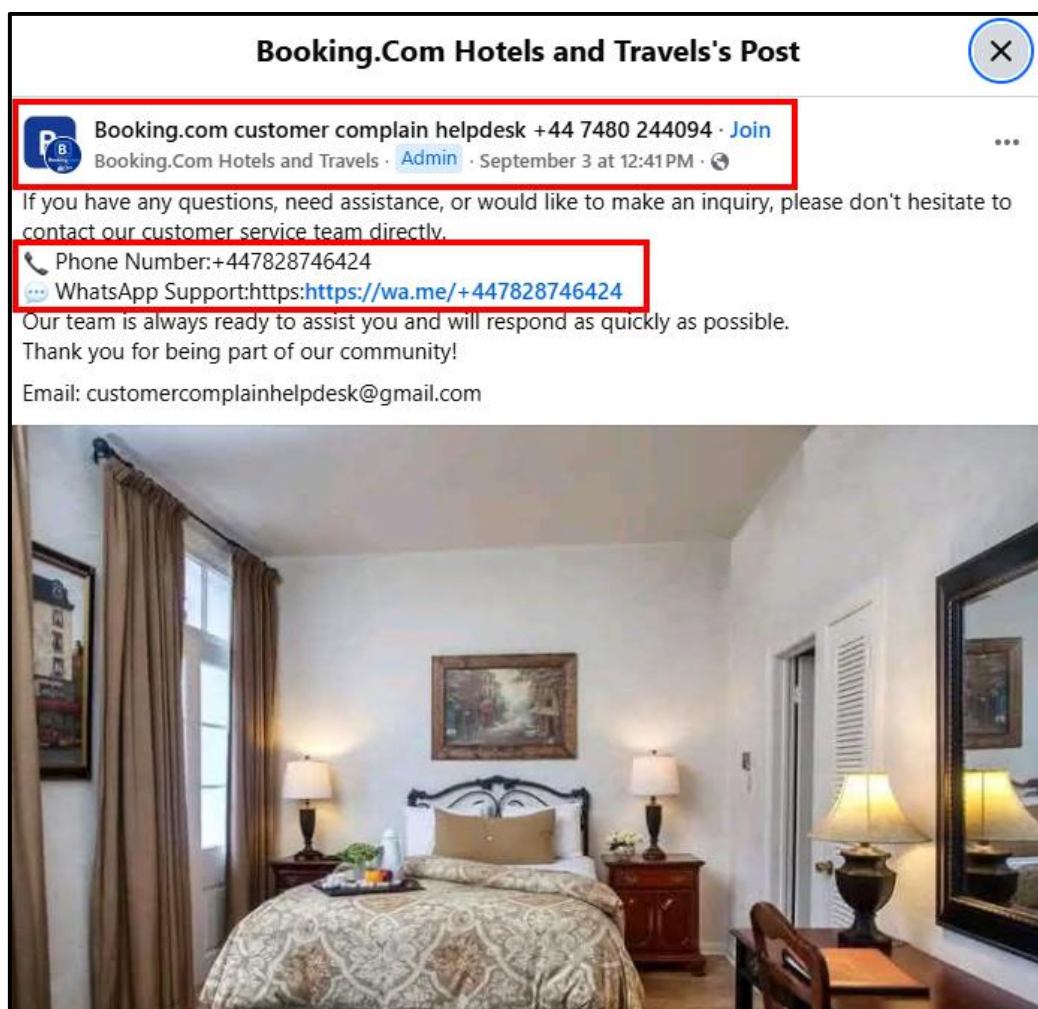


Figure 7: Facebook post advertising fraudulent customer support numbers

AI-GENERATED META SUMMARIES ON FACEBOOK

We also observed the fraudulent numbers appearing in AI-generated summaries in Facebook search, labeled "Summarized by Meta AI." When a user searches for the phone numbers listed in the customer support PDFs, or for a Booking.com telephone number or customer service contact, the AI summary returns an answer that includes the fraudulent numbers.

Based on our observations, the AI appears to be automatically summarizing a large volume of bot-generated posts and discussion that repeat these numbers. Since the summary is built from content available on the platform, a coordinated volume of fake posts can cause a fraudulent number to be presented to users as a direct answer.

For a victim, an answer presented by the platform itself may carry even more authority than a search result on a trusted domain, because it appears to come from Facebook rather than from a third party. This finding also shows that the campaign extends beyond airlines: Booking.com is an online travel agency, which indicates the scammers are targeting travel support searches more broadly.

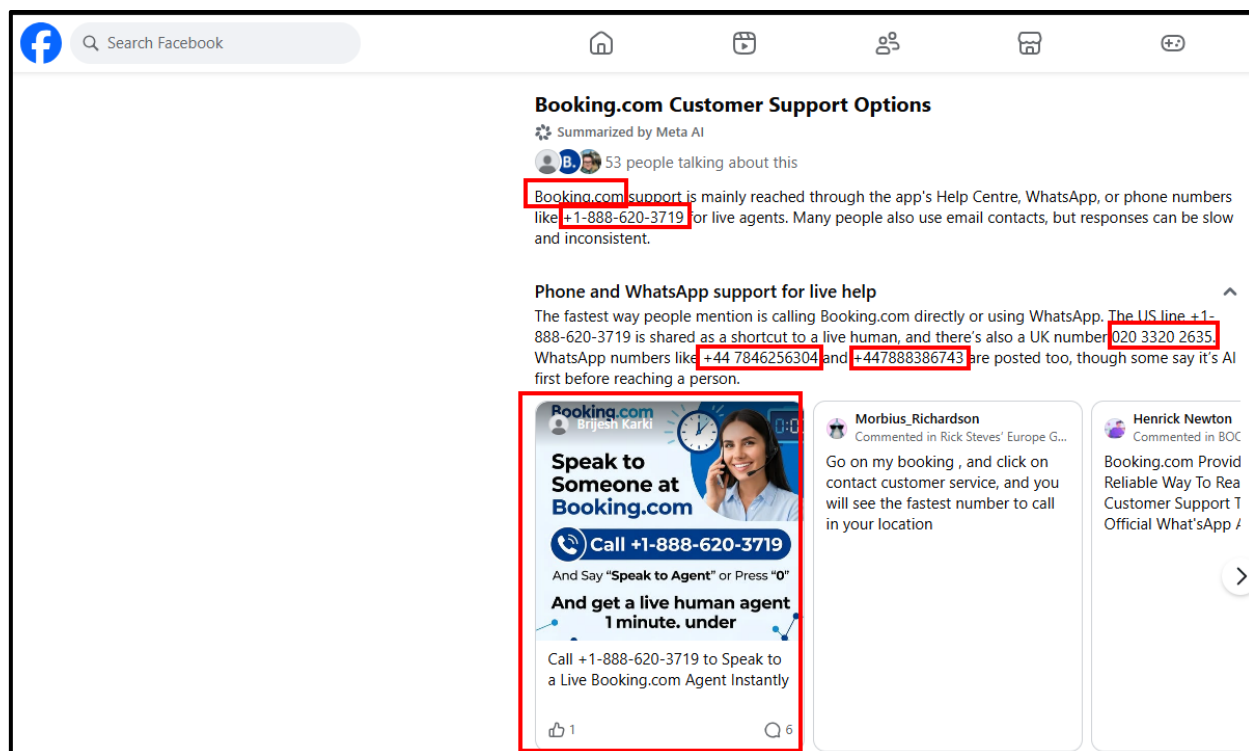


Figure 8: Meta AI summary returning a fraudulent Booking.com live agent number

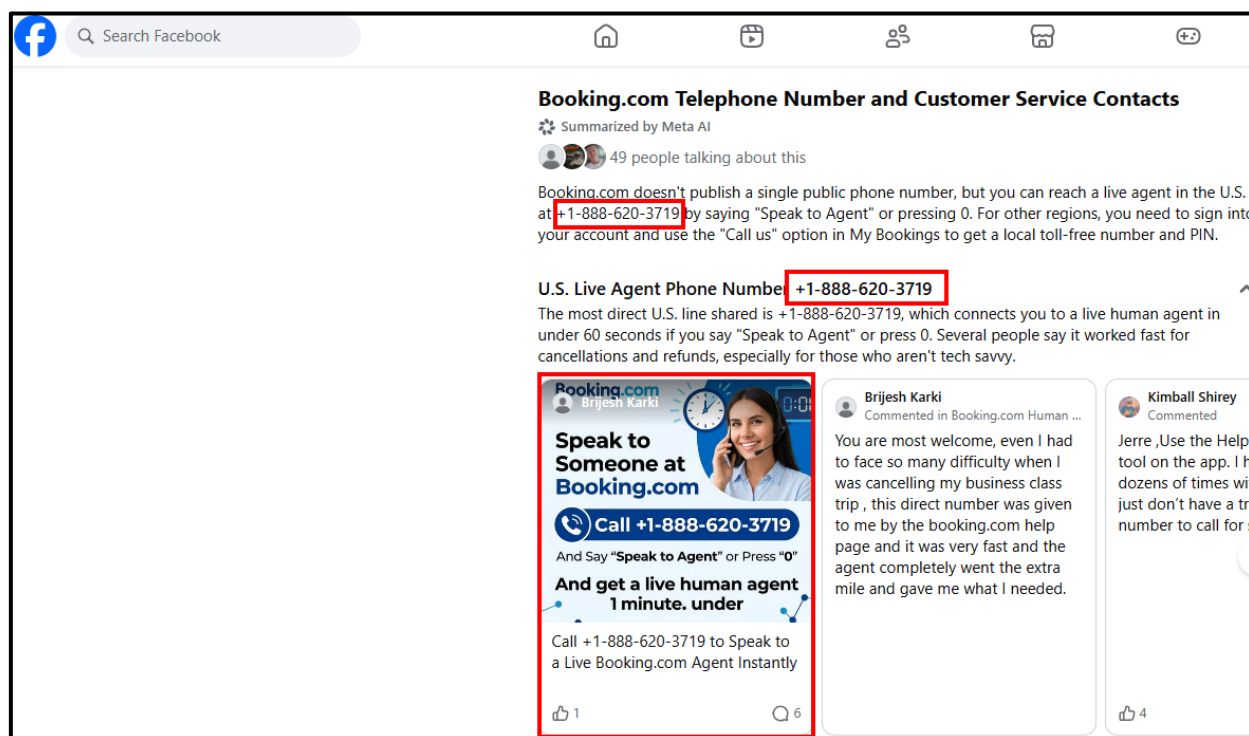


Figure 9: Meta AI summary returning a fraudulent Booking.com live agent number

THREAT ACTOR TTPs

The techniques below are assessed from the hosting patterns and URL paths we observed across the affected domains. We observed no site compromise. Instead, the threat actors abuse endpoints that meet two conditions at once: they accept write input without meaningful authentication, and they expose the result at a URL that search engine and AI crawlers index under the host's domain authority. The URL path of each hosted PDF is the most useful piece of evidence, because each platform leaks a characteristic path that reveals which component accepted the file.

ABUSE OF PUBLIC FILE UPLOAD FEATURES

Many organizations deliberately expose features that accept files from the public and then publish them at a stable, public URL. Examples observed in this campaign include university webforms for thesis approvals and program applications, job application and careers portals, an EU multimedia submission form, a US federal document submission system, and a Utah state document portal that publishes submitted documents straight to a public directory.

These features are working as designed. The weakness is that the uploaded file is served from the organization's own domain, often without review or virus scanning. A scammer submits a PDF through the form and receives back a live link on a trusted domain, which can then be seeded into search engines. Because the file sits in a legitimate upload area rather than in the site's main content tree, it frequently escapes the notice of the site's editors.

ABUSE OF CONTENT MANAGEMENT SYSTEM (CMS) FORM COMPONENTS

Most of the affected sites run on content management systems, and it is the form and upload components, not the CMS core, that expose the upload path. The following were observed:

- **Drupal webforms:** file fields on public webforms are written to `/sites/default/files/webform/`, `/applicant/`, or `/supplementary/` and served directly. Observed on Georgia Tech, europa.eu, USDA, and a nonprofit careers site.
- **WordPress form plugins:** each plugin has its own upload directory under `/wp-content/uploads/`. Observed: Formidable Forms (`/formidable/`), WPForms (`/wpforms/tmp/`), Fusion or Avada Forms (`/fusion-forms/`), and WPJobBoard (`/wpjobboard/application/`). The WPForms temporary staging folder should never be crawlable, so its indexing points to a misconfiguration.
- **Optimizely (Episerver):** uploaded assets are exposed under `/contentassets/`. Observed on a university library site.
- **Custom government portals:** document submission systems that publish uploads to a public folder, such as Utah's `/pendingDocuments/`.
- **Weak upload validation:** PDFs are a normal, expected upload type on these forms, so they pass extension and content-type checks and do not trigger the alarms an executable or script would.

This abuse is low-skill and repeatable: no exploit is needed, only a form that does not restrict who can upload and where the file ends up. That is why the victim set spans unrelated universities, a Spanish ministry, a Moldovan consulate, US federal, state, county, and city government, and the European Union.

ABUSE OF USER-GENERATED CONTENT PLATFORMS

The second family follows the same logic without a file. Any platform that publishes user text to a crawlable page is a candidate: forums, retailer communities, creator blogs, event listings, waiver pages, and even a

quotes feature. The scammers use disposable accounts, and posts on high-authority domains such as Lenovo and Galaxus rank in the same way as the hosted PDFs.

OTHER METHODS (VULNERABILITIES, CREDENTIALS, EXPLOTS)

We also considered exploitation of vulnerable CMS plugins with arbitrary file upload flaws, unpatched known vulnerabilities, stolen content-editor credentials, and publicly writable storage such as open directories or cloud buckets. We found no evidence of any of these in this dataset. They remain possible for individual hosts, but the observed pattern is fully explained by abuse of open upload and publishing features.

AUTOMATION, TOOLING, AND SCALE

The appearance of near-identical documents across many unrelated organizations is the clearest sign that the campaign is likely automated rather than hand-crafted. The file metadata confirms it: batches of documents generated seconds apart with incrementing counters, a bespoke Windows automation application, and reuse of the same templates across brands. A workflow consistent with what we observed would discover sites exposing an open form or upload path, generate PDFs from a common template while varying the airline name and phone number, upload them in bulk, and then confirm each public URL and push it for indexing. This industrialized approach lets a small team place fraudulent content on many reputable domains at very low cost.

WHY DOCUMENTS APPEAR IN ANTIVIRUS REPOSITORIES

Submission records show the files were uploaded through a single API integration, from an egress point that geolocates to the US, while timezone metadata in some of the documents suggests India. A single API integration does not necessarily mean a single person: security products, email gateways, and file-scanning services commonly submit files from all of their users through one integration. Three explanations remain plausible:

- The threat actors, or a tool in their production workflow, submitting files to check whether security products flag them.
- A security product or scanning service submitting files automatically when its users, including potential victims, open or receive the documents.
- A crawler or monitoring service that collects files from the web and submits them for analysis.

Some evidence leans toward a source close to document production. The submitted filenames are internal production names with counters, such as EU-AIRLINE271getresponse.pdf, rather than the descriptive names the same documents carry on the hosting sites, and at least one file was submitted about 20 minutes after its creation timestamp. This is not conclusive, because an automated pipeline could also scan files as soon as they are produced or published, so we do not attribute the submissions to the threat actors.

WHY THE THREAT ACTORS ARE DOING IT

SEARCH ENGINE REPUTATION & AI ANSWERS

Search engines generally take the reputation of the hosting domain into account when ranking content. A PDF on a long-established corporate or government domain can rank for searches such as "[airline] refund phone number" more readily than the same file on a newly registered domain. Search engines also index the text inside PDFs, so the airline name and phone number become searchable. This is exemplified in the screenshot below, when conducting a simple Google search, how the official websites response and domain is listed at the bottom, with malicious fraudulent websites higher in ranking.

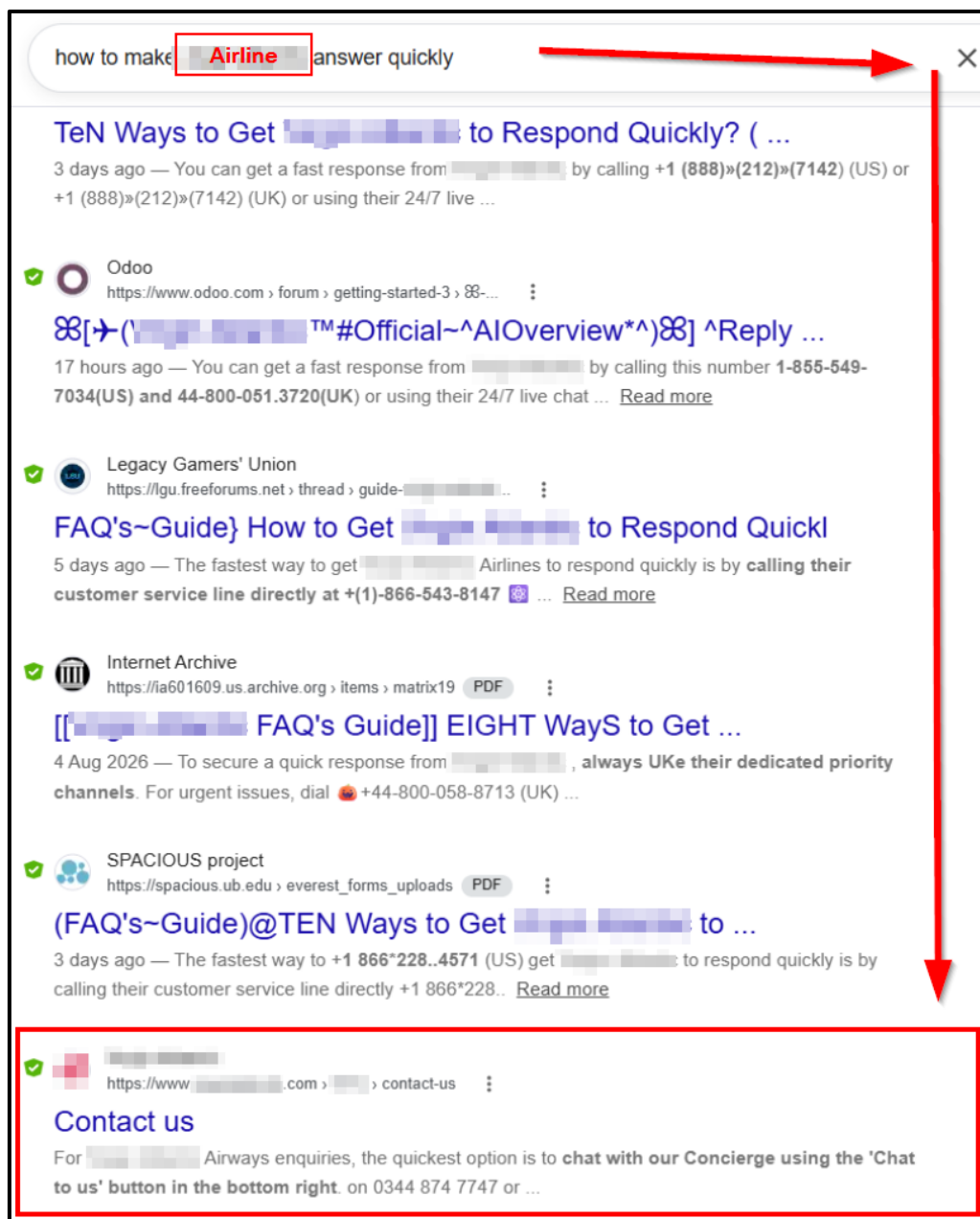


Figure 10: Legitimate support page shown behind fraudulent PDFs and domains

The objective is increasingly Answer Engine Optimization (AEO) and Generative Engine Optimization (GEO) rather than classic SEO: the goal is to be the number an AI assistant or answer engine repeats as the answer, not merely to rank in a list of results. Keyword-stuffed, question-and-answer formatted content on trusted domains is well suited to being retrieved and summarized by AI systems, as the Meta AI summaries in this campaign show. Independent research by Aurascape has documented the same technique affecting other AI search products.

CREDIBILITY WITH VICTIMS

A traveler who sees a government or well-known brand domain in a search result, or receives the number from an AI summary, is more likely to believe the phone number is genuine. This is especially effective when the traveler is already under pressure from a cancellation, delay, or pending refund, and it removes many of the usual "bad website" cues that would otherwise warn them.

EVASION, PERSISTENCE AND LOW COST

Security tools and blocklists rarely block established corporate and government domains, so links to these files are less likely to be filtered. The files themselves contain no malicious code and are not detected by antivirus engines. Removal also depends on each hosting organization finding and deleting the file, which can leave documents live and indexed for long periods. Uploading a PDF through an open upload feature costs the scammers almost nothing, requires no infrastructure of their own, and can be repeated across many websites and brands. Rotating toll-free numbers are similarly cheap to provision and discard.

FILE AND HASH INVESTIGATION

This section presents a deep-dive investigation of the PDF files behind the campaign. The analysis covers a sample of 44 PDFs: an original set of 17 samples, 21 further files discovered through antivirus repository content searches, and a cluster of 6 Latin America files. Indicators, metadata, submission records, and similarity data come from antivirus repositories and threat intelligence platforms. All hashes are listed in the Indicators of Compromise appendix.

SUBMISSION CHANNEL AND ATTRIBUTION

Every file examined was submitted through the same API integration, submitter identifier 2269ef75, from an egress point that geolocates to the US. As explained in the Threat Actor TTPs section, this identifies a submission channel, not necessarily the threat actors, so the attribution below rests on evidence inside the documents rather than on who submitted them. The US egress is consistent with a VPN, proxy, cloud host, or a security service's own infrastructure.

Two signals inside the files relate to where the documents were produced:

- **Timezone:** files generated with the jsPDF library record their creation time with a +05:30 offset, which is used only by India and Sri Lanka, including a file recently created on 27 September 2026. The offset is written automatically, but it reflects the timezone configured on the generating machine, not necessarily the person's location: a system clock can be set to any zone, and a remote server can run in India Standard Time. Files from the other toolchains record UTC, so this signal comes from the jsPDF files only.
- **Language:** Hindi and Hinglish tokens appear in titles and filenames, such as JAI-HO, baarishwalamausam ("rainy weather"), relaxbhairankingaygiab, and TUNTUNG. These are casual internal labels, which suggests they reflect the team's own language; the victim-facing content is in English and Spanish. Language indicates Hindi speakers, not a location: a diaspora or outsourced team elsewhere would produce the same tokens. Filenames also include the Hindi given-name tokens chota vishal ("little Vishal") and sagar.

The following attributes describe the threat actors' environment but do not indicate a location:

- **Workstation:** browser-printed PDFs leak a Creator string of Chrome 151 on Windows 10 (64-bit).
- **Custom tooling:** a file carries the Creator string pdf-automation-suite/1.0.0 on Chrome 126 and Electron 31.7.7, which is a bespoke Windows automation application.
- **Possible names:** the tokens vishal and sagar may be worker tags or aliases rather than real names.

We assess with low confidence that the documents were produced by Hindi-speaking individuals, potentially based in India. The assessment rests on only two indicators. The timezone stamp is the stronger one, because it is written automatically but appears only in the jsPDF files reflecting a machine setting rather than a confirmed location. The language artifacts indicate Hindi speakers but not where they are. Submission timing

is not used as an indicator, because the owner of the submission channel is undetermined. Metadata can in principle be forged, but the files are not designed to withstand forensic examination, which makes deliberate fabrication unlikely. The names vishal and sagar are low-confidence identity leads: they are equally consistent with internal worker tags or aliases, and should not be treated as identified individuals without corroboration. Identifying the account behind the submission channel would require a request to the repository operator through the appropriate legal channel.

PRODUCTION TOOLCHAINS

At least six generation methods were observed, all tied to the same submitter:

Method	Producer or tell	Notes
Google Docs native export	Skia/PDF m153-m156 Google Docs Renderer	Bulk of corpus; build number climbs over time (m153 to m156).
Browser "Print to PDF" of a Google Doc	Skia/PDF m151 + Creator: Chrome/151 Windows; title left as Untitled document - Google Docs	Leaks workstation fingerprint.
Programmatic generation	jsPDF 2.5.1, PDF v1.3, autoaction/js-embedded tags	Batch, counter-numbered, generated seconds apart. JS is benign library scaffolding.
Compressed jsPDF	jsPDF 2.5.1, filename prefix compressed_	Same family, run through a PDF compressor.
Ghostscript post-compression	GPL Ghostscript 10.02.1 / 10.05.1; CreatorTool: UnknownApplication; XMP toolkit; DocumentID uuid:...; purl.org in XMP	Compression/re-save step (explains compressed_ naming). Seen on the AIRLINE/LATAM batch.
Custom automation app (pdf-lib)	Producer: pdf-lib; Creator: pdf-automation-suite/1.0.0, Chrome/126, Electron/31.7.7, Windows	Bespoke threat actor tool. High-value fingerprint.

Table 3: PDF production toolchains observed

When read chronologically, the toolchains trace a maturing operation. It begins manually, with Google Docs exports and browser Print to PDF, moves to scripted batch generation with jsPDF 2.5.1 (files produced seconds apart with incrementing counters), and by September runs a bespoke pipeline: a custom Electron application emitting PDFs through pdf-lib, with a Ghostscript compression pass. Examining a span of seven weeks revealed that threat actors moved from hand-crafting documents to operating purpose-built software, and the Chromium build number climbing from m151 to m156 shows a continuously updated environment. This indicates the profile of a small team investing in tooling to scale output, not a one-off spammer.

TEMPLATE AND NAMING FINGERPRINTS

A handful of master documents are re-skinned. Repository similarity hashes (vhash) cluster the templates:

Similarity hash (vhash)	Family	Reliability for enumeration
9694262d186c3058058f9c7455b2cbe9c	Google Docs template A	Noisy - collides with unrelated Google-Docs PDFs
9490364612dfd24c3660f0fd49b11c335	Google Docs template B	Noisy (see §4)
9bec8f5140fb592755c04363e8acbf9dd	Google Docs template C	Noisy

Similarity hash (vhash)	Family	Reliability for enumeration
9bef527718d218bdb688fd1127b0473de	jsPDF family	Specific, but not exhaustive: at least one jsPDF file (EU-AIRLINE115.pdf) has a different vhash
9844480d217ba92a7f259d19c8b228338	Ghostscript family	Shared by two AIRLINE files

Table 4: Template clusters by vhash

Filenames follow durable conventions that work as fingerprints:

- **Incrementing counters:**, rankinguk-009, ana-519, air-*REDACED*-flights-411, Guatemala-week-off112, ranking-R14. These act as an internal production ledger.
- **Keyboard-mash throwaways:** gfhfg.pdf, TUNTUNG9.pdf, fedrgdsrgrg12dsfvs.pdf, asdfg-....
- **Reused content:** the boilerplate phrase "24/7 assistance in the U.S. and France" appears verbatim in both EU-AIRLINE and ANA documents, and a failed find-and-replace left "PREMIA Airlines" inside a United document.
- **Ranking vocabulary:** names such as rankinguk, ranking-R14, and senior-ranking suggest the threat actors may think of the work as a ranking service.

Cleared as a lead: the jsPDF "js-embedded" and "autoaction" tags are benign library scaffolding. Repository behavior data shows no JavaScript objects and only a generic OpenAction, and sandbox analysis rates the files clean. Hosts contacted during sandbox detonation (Adobe, Akamai, Microsoft, AWS, and Cloudflare addresses), dropped files, and a single medium-severity Sigma match inside the sandbox are detonation noise, not threat actor infrastructure.

CORPUS SCALE AND ENUMERATION

The most reliable enumeration method is an antivirus repository content query by filename token. A single query for EU-AIRLINE -named PDFs returned 25 files, which is an API cap, so more exist. All matched the kit's producer and naming conventions. Repeating the query per brand and filtering to the same submission channel would enumerate the wider corpus.

Similarity searches on the Google Docs vhashes are unreliable, because they collide with any Google Docs-exported PDF. One returned neighbor was an unrelated 97-page religious document. Two structural neighbors were positively re-confirmed to the same submission channel: fedrgdsrgrg12dsfvs.pdf (Google Docs m156) and compressed_Guatemala-week-off112.pdf (jsPDF, created 27 September 2026 04:20 IST), which is evidence of ongoing activity and Latin America expansion.

DETECTION GAP

Every confirmed campaign file examined scored 0 detections across the 61 to 64 antivirus engines in the repositories at the time of our re-check. The only engine that flagged them was the repository's AI-based code analysis, which read the content and classified the samples as malicious SEO poisoning and vishing lures, for example identifying the number +1-888-548-7012 in a EU-AIRLINE document.

The gap is structural, not a lapse. File scanning looks for executable maliciousness such as exploit code, macros, embedded script payloads, droppers, and callback URLs. These PDFs contain none of that. They are ordinary, well-formed documents whose only weapon is a phone number placed in a deceptive context. That maliciousness is semantic, so signature and behavioral engines have nothing to detect. Closing this gap requires content-aware and brand-aware detection that reasons about impersonation rather than binaries.

VERIFICATION NOTES

We checked the following against antivirus repositories, threat intelligence platforms, and public sources:

Item checked	Result
Submission channel 2269ef75, API interface, US egress	Confirmed on a sample spanning the start, middle, and end of the activity window. This identifies the submission channel, not who operates it
Producers and Creator strings (Google Docs, Print to PDF Chrome 151, jsPDF 2.5.1, Ghostscript 10.02.1 and 10.05.1, pdf-lib with pdf-automation-suite/1.0.0)	Confirmed
+05:30 timezone stamp	Confirmed on jsPDF files. Corrected: Ghostscript, pdf-lib, and Print to PDF files record UTC, so the stamp is not consistent across all toolchains
jsPDF vhash 9bef527718d218bdb688fd1127b0473de	Confirmed on the newest file. Corrected: not all jsPDF files share it
Shared CANADIAN AIRLINE vhash 9844480d217ba92a7f259d19c8b228338	Confirmed
0 antivirus detections	Confirmed on all files re-checked (0 of 61 to 64 engines)
Numbers flagged by repository AI analysis (+1-888-548-7012, +1-866-652-2846, +34-900-751-029)	Confirmed
Start of activity window	7 August 2026 in IST corresponds to 6 August 2026 in UTC
No named threat, campaign, or collection in threat intelligence platforms	Confirmed; searches returned only unrelated reporting
chicago.mfa.gov.md ownership	Confirmed as the Consulate General of the Republic of Moldova in Chicago
Lenovo hosting type	Confirmed as a text post on the student creator platform, not a hosted PDF
Aurascape research date	Originally published December 2025, with a later update; not March 2026 as first recorded

Table 5: Independent verification of hash investigation data

PHONE NUMBER INFRASTRUCTURE

The phone numbers behave as a shared, rotating pool of call center intake lines rather than brand-specific numbers: the same number fronts multiple brands, and each brand cycles through many numbers. Exact numbers return essentially no hits in public scam databases, which is consistent with rotation faster than complaints accumulate. The numbers are therefore good discovery pivots but weak attribution pivots.

Toll-free and freephone ranges (US 888, 866, and 855, UK 0800 and 0808, Spain 900) and Mexico City numbers are cheap to provision through VoIP resellers and cheap to discard. Rotation is a deliberate resilience tactic: it defeats number blocklists, keeps each line free of reverse-lookup reputation, and limits the damage when one number is reported. A single intake line can serve many brands because the agent answers with a non-committal "customer service" greeting and lets the caller name the airline. The regional mix is intentional localization: Spanish, Mexican, and US numbers presented together indicate a dedicated Spanish-language desk, matching the Spanish and Latin America content. Whether the threat actors run the call center themselves or sell ranked numbers to other fraud call centers cannot be determined from the files alone.

NUMBERS IDENTIFIED IN THE HASH INVESTIGATION (SAMPLE)

Number(s)	Region	Brands observed	Notes
+1-888-548-7012 +44-808-196-8680	US / UK	Swiss, Air Canada, Lufthansa, ANA	Bridge indicator - links the VT PDF corpus to the parasite-hosted content.
+1-888-274-1875 +44-800-652-9725	US / UK	United, JetBlue, Lufthansa, Viking, Air Transat	Workhorse pair; UK line is the most-reused across brands.
+1-888-449-8085 +44-800-652-9725	US / UK	United, Thai, Chinese Airline, Allegiant	
+1-888-821-5531	US	Budget (car rental)	
+1-866-652-2846	US	EU-AIRLINE	From VT PDF AI analysis.
+34-900-751-029	ES	EU-AIRLINE (Spanish)	From VT PDF AI analysis.
+34-900-680-170 +52-554-161-1652 +1-855-726-3012	ES / MX / US	Travelocity, Booking, PriceTravel	Spanish-language / LATAM desk.
+1-866-673-3161 +1-888-217-5158	US	Southwest	Seen on Goodreads "quotes".

Table 6: Phone number pool from the hash investigation

NUMBERS OBSERVED IN OUR SCREENSHOTS (SAMPLE)

The screenshots collected in the Discovery section show a further set of numbers. The pair +1-866-567-1510 and +44-161-568-0019 is the most significant: it appears in a hosted PDF, an Instagram advertisement, a Lenovo creator post (Hainan Airlines), and a Utah state portal PDF (Chinese Airline), linking four separate channels.

Number(s)	Region	Brand	Where observed
+1-866-567-1510 +44-161-568-0019	US / UK	Generic airline, Hainan Airlines, Chinese Airline	Figure 2 PDF, Figure 6 Instagram ad, Figure 5 Lenovo post, Figure 4 Utah PDF
+34-951-783-194 +52-554-163-6016 +1-209-751-0923	ES / MX / US	Airline (obfuscated), Spanish	Figure 1 Spanish-language PDF
+52-800-351-0151 +1-855-564-8070	MX / US	American Airlines Mexico	Figure 3 PDFs on chicago.mfa.gov.md
+1-888-620-3719 +44-20-3320-2635	US / UK	Booking.com	Figures 8 and 9 Meta AI summaries
+44-7846-256304 +44-7888-386743	UK mobile (WhatsApp)	Booking.com	Figure 8 Meta AI summary
+44-7480-244094 +44-7828-746424	UK mobile (WhatsApp)	Booking.com	Figure 7 Facebook page

Table 7: Additional phone numbers observed in screenshots

None of the screenshot numbers appear in the hash investigation's number pool, so the link between the two sets is not established from the phone data alone. The shared hosting surfaces, including documents on

the same Utah portal uploaded on the same day (5 September 2026), the same content style, and the same brand targeting, indicate that they are likely part of the same operation or a closely related one (moderate confidence).

Targeted brands observed to date (approximately 20.)

ATTACK FLOW

1. **Manufacture:** keyword-stuffed "how to contact [brand]" guides are generated in bulk from shared templates, varying the brand name and phone number.
2. **Seed:** the PDFs are uploaded, or the text posted, to third-party websites and platforms that accept anonymous content and expose it to crawlers.
3. **Index:** search engines, and increasingly AI answer engines and platform AI summaries such as Meta AI, ingest the content and rank it, borrowing the host domain's authority.
4. **Capture:** a traveler in a stressful moment, such as a cancellation or missed flight, searches for support, sees the number, and calls.
5. **Monetize:** based on the content and public reporting, a call center agent using airline terminology and urgency likely pressures the victim to either commence their fraudulent refund, customer support issue, pay a bogus rebooking, reissue, or name-change fee through irreversible methods such as gift cards, wire transfers, peer-to-peer payments, or cryptocurrency, and may harvest booking and payment data or push remote access software.

IMPACT

- **Travelers:** financial loss, theft of payment and personal data, and takeover of booking or loyalty accounts.
- **Airlines and travel brands:** brand damage and loss of customer trust, added pressure on customer support from defrauded customers, and complaints directed at the brand for fraud it did not commit.
- **Hosting organizations:** universities, city, county, state, and federal government bodies, and the EU unknowingly serve fraud from their own trusted domains, creating reputational harm, possible liability, and abuse-desk workload, and signaling that their upload features are open to further abuse.

RECOMMENDATIONS

FOR AIRLINES AND TRAVEL BRANDS

- Monitor search results, file repositories, social platforms, and AI assistant answers for content that pairs the brand's name with support, refund, or claims terms.
- Report fraudulent documents to the hosting organizations, request removal, and request de-indexing from search engines. Report impersonating pages and posts to Meta.
- Publish official support and refund contact numbers prominently, and remind customers to use only numbers listed on the official website, app, or booking confirmation.
- Track the phone numbers in this report and report them through telecom provider abuse channels.

- Track and takedown any impersonating whatsapp, social media brand impersonating accounts.

FOR ORGANIZATIONS HOSTING THE FILES

- Require authentication and moderation before uploaded files are published, and restrict accepted file types with an allowlist.
- Move form uploads out of crawlable directories, and make sure temporary staging folders such as /wpforms/tmp/ are never publicly indexed. Without these fixes, removed content is typically re-seeded within days.
- Audit media storage and upload paths for PDFs unrelated to the organization's business, using the hunting signatures in this report, and remove them.
- Government and EU hosts should be prioritized, given the trust their domains carry.

FOR SECURITY TEAMS

- Recognize that file reputation and antivirus will not detect this threat class. Use content-aware and brand-aware detection that identifies impersonation.
- Load the indicators in the appendix into monitoring, and enumerate further files by searching antivirus repositories for brand filename tokens and the submission channel identifier.

GUIDANCE FOR TRAVELERS

- Get airline and travel support numbers only from the brand's official website, app, or booking confirmation, not from search results, PDFs, social media posts, or AI-generated answers.
- Treat any request for payment card details, fees to release a refund, gift cards, or installation of software as a strong sign of fraud.

CONCLUSION

This investigation shows how a low-cost, low-skill technique can produce a high-impact fraud operation. The threat actors behind this campaign never needed to breach a single website. Instead, they abuse public upload forms and user-generated content features on government, university, and commercial websites, and borrow the credibility of those domains to place fraudulent support numbers in front of travelers at the moment they need help.

The same numbers then spread across social media and surface in AI-generated summaries, so a victim may encounter the fraud through a search result, a trusted website, or an answer the platform itself appears to endorse. Because the documents contain no malicious code, antivirus engines do not detect them, and file-based defenses alone cannot close the gap.

The operation was still active on the date of this report, and the evidence points to continued growth in volume, brands, and languages. Removing individual files will not be enough on its own, as automated tooling allows the threat actors to re-seed content quickly. Lasting impact requires coordinated action: airlines and travel brands monitoring search results, social platforms, and AI answers for their brand names; hosting organizations securing their upload features; platforms and search engines removing and de-indexing fraudulent content; and telecom providers disrupting the phone numbers used.

Travelers should obtain support numbers only from official websites, apps, or booking confirmations. Check Point Exposure Management will continue to monitor this campaign and report on further developments.

APPENDIX: INDICATORS OF COMPROMISE

Host URLs point to live fraudulent content and are defanged below. Do not call the listed phone numbers.

FILE HASHES (SHA-256)

ORIGINAL SAMPLE SET

HA-256	Filename	Toolchain
752c4b180a0cfad4d2c17cb1134b3ec316d4b8c37d6fb7890e732ad854312c3b	EU-AIRLINE271getresponse.pdf	GDocs m153
a4aa3f00408fc40b87c4170f5e72e762991acb58df71d6a200a19295cf39d430	Iron-Man-Mark-EU-AIRLINE.pdf	GDocs m153
a44371476460494afeda02a848ed5e70ebe73516b34b1614fa94c2bea7ea2523	TUNTUNG9.pdf	GDocs m154
493a83f273d1a2e98707638d86363b7444b46ad73bbe4242de10cb0678d98acb	EU-AIRLINE-airline-qq1.pdf (AI: vishing +1-888-548-7012)	GDocs m153
98a5616dd286417bb9020314b172bde974497664fb67198978b3f236c1fa82a6	gfhfg.pdf	GDocs m153
d6e7cfc535385c8b1853125b12b8fd477ff93937e205f38bc5b04454996d8f3b	EU-AIRLINE-UK-LHR.pdf	GDocs m153
58817fc4cb5331d4390f110f5a2d6a0ed4806c1cbfaabdd4a6652cff14c40ade	EU-AIRLINE-name-correction-and-name-change.pdf	GDocs m153
f1eb138426a19f5340de677eeeeceee20b9f5df6c033370ddbf317c828018aa	EU-AIRLINE3.pdf (print-to-PDF, Chrome/151)	Print m151
b7416e2e34e9d49de461523fd81e2cb7e304d79a805207412b2b1a3ad5410660	rankinguk-009..pdf	GDocs m153
2e21541123d9e3c45873e762a90c25c6ce34232524a7a141156a9a6a8e763c30	EU-AIRLINE-baarishwalamausam.pdf	GDocs m153
4407e232971cdf9ce7d5de6ac17788f34ae043071ed78c8c232ddc86d499eea5	Nine-Methods-EU-AIRLINE.pdf	GDocs m153
b7c989960251264bd2b6a3c173b6aac0195284abb1508c8158fc32017f7523c0	EU-AIRLINE1.pdf (AI: Spanish +1-866-652-2846 / +34-900-751-029)	Print m151
c9c553d9a137b5733a989e2fcb50aab20380b0ec901bebdcc6d029cab253e636	EU-AIRLINE-FlightBookingGuideeeeeeeeeee.pdf	GDocs m153
db3f30e7aaebcc7f3accfeafe0ab755e524c4edd09bb66412d450c834361e2b	EU-AIRLINE-seniordiscount-help0987.pdf	GDocs m153
9aceaa7ac7508fc7b43380c596f693bbae4246fb57c1a7bc71deb504bc80dac3	EU-AIRLINE115.pdf	jsPDF 2.5.1
41d874b29a6324992b4bd28f42a6ed0befa9a44ee3d53641056b0dfbfd7df434	EU-AIRLINE116.pdf	jsPDF 2.5.1
5e4bb002f387ee575eb10f03abefdaab8456d26822454ba7266a086395d0577e	EU-AIRLINE11.pdf	jsPDF 2.5.1

DISCOVERED THROUGH ANTIVIRUS REPOSITORY SEARCHES

SHA-256	Filename	Build
0796e05a580368952cbcd9e2d4e50934fa87f87708b5c8d1f6ed3bbe35aa17ba	EU-AIRLINE_Espanaaaa.pdf	m155
1c05160938e421a694c519148a3435e858a8b9a612a35ee68d17dc2c63faef19	quick-response-EU-AIRLINE.pdf	m155
4b2a046f96e9621b8a5381afdabfb38a2a351b88f669a96a71424fd5d60b6fb3	EU-AIRLINE-flight-rebook-policy0.pdf	m155
1669a3a4358b0ce6795164f0c9c3feb2c32bde0ee7e09ec83b3bdb7e3c8da0d2	EU-AIRLINE-ranking-R14.pdf	m155
3d1279007110f9f75ba5e1f063635fc7e6b1588d9e9f5b9d5aa466aafa0859e7	EU-AIRLINE-Guidee13.pdf	m155
6896cbffeb40e1390433c0b5eef225c38a3a4576f562213465d3e5463307ee25	EU-AIRLINE.pdf	m153
f20de9ea1379cc45ba67de13eb1104a52533edad208e1459a69451bb1429ea27	EU-AIRLINE.pdf	m153
725e1bdd25ee3dca328685e06cd8800fbf14e73a439a18bf27398c82f1b3f895	EU-AIRLINE-ticket-booking.pdf	m153
d8e0c8ef776f726aad97dd8b5ce5c8da58f0bc159607fd647940b7dcd9ea0be4	EU-AIRLINE-senior-bookingggggggg.pdf	m153
61b27d5280d7cbb3b418b4a4ff806387ef852995ae03faf57989a59ce8220e1	EU-AIRLINE-senior-rankinghiranking.pdf	m153
684f69d2c337a216fb8a3259dd6fe8a61bd5a3f919573925c90b0c7c002dc1a5	EU-AIRLINE-seniorimportantcontent.pdf	m153
0773d0e0ae0fd4cd51e1ece79cc3da5afd53dcfb786c20b3a1cef96a531a1567	EU-AIRLINE-AyudaDirecta-QKvz16W7lryT.pdf	m153
e9b4df5ee803a86a467a144caf0ad49aed818894c18455126dd2b4b3f4c817c	EU-AIRLINE-relaxbhairankingaygiab.pdf	m153
157fb99280ff1b92987b56eedae248cec04a9c28a15360b1cc3d66812190c50e	EU-AIRLINE-HowtoBook.pdf	m153
29458f91caba339c6150cdac05d379e1d7fcde83bda6b3c6f442a2d161e8ce72	Respond-EU-AIRLINE-11.pdf	m153

SHA-256	Filename	Build
c5636bb0d9d8db98baabdc705401ac982eb3f1fa2d20b62d1f936aca1fa4c71e	AIRLINE.pdf	m153
5598f349adb187e38643d66fee26115a0fa892357ce335a8d6d2e0fc61e944ba	5-AIRLINE.pdf	m153
e297c502f8471634f106a870a6d5e684b7f52c12a33866c6985f8f693e454872	AIRLINE-UK.pdf	m153
9dff751539869ae358783f0ca53ffa65bef80d6ba11c3aa8ec6682e8481c8924	AIRLINE-FAQS-Guide.pdf	m153
ec479a4ba76914ba5a5bfe2c5a55571ed39f15dc45e98f8078de8f3d6db43dcf	fedrgdsrgrg12dsfvs.pdf (submitter-confirmed)	m156
d64a3ea84700012c2d54acde513bdf6fc539b0e3564c38efe927786564bab43f	compressed_Guatemala-week-off112.pdf (27 Sep 2026, submitter-confirmed)	jsPDF 2.5.1

LATIN AMERICAN CLUSTER (SAMPLE)

SHA-256	Filename and producer	Created
13b516755e233bdcdd790731ef2641d5e5ee8ca8f3809f28385bf5206c0f9ae	AIRLINE-chota-vishal-nj47w-compressed.pdf Ghostscript 10.05.1	10 Sep 2026
237be6f018afd5fetc964dbb02b6b5266f745af851a8bf15d98b04c1f7aa4b71	AIRLINE-mexico-tejab-v16.pdf (title TEMP_AIRLINE) Ghostscript 10.02.1	11 Sep 2026
4ade6df01e92cf14b6fa2dd012b24361eaac189a3f0de91d71c480641b12bc39	AIRLINE-spain-FAQs-4.pdf pdf-lib, pdf-automation-suite/1.0.0	12 Sep 2026
a26d8cb1da57d853beda67ae94cac051f1fd27b9f51ed7c78160c4a1fa8e7057	AIRLINE-sagar-gay-mxw93.pdf Ghostscript 10.02.1	14 Sep 2026
18bb4f0cc600f91ddc56b5551d33c56a2f68c4aaca6697fb2959ef05277a7de	AIRLINE-proplayer-mi8mm.pdf Ghostscript 10.02.1	15 Sep 2026
1672b11250df5152b492ffdda71d76b7cab093c14df0c1f64cda7febfac403e	AIRLINE-demaand-ry46k.pdf Ghostscript 10.02.1	16 Sep 2026

HOSTING URLS

Host	Example URL (defanged)
otc.education.tamu.edu	hxxps://otc[.]education[.]tamu[.]edu/wp-content/uploads/formidable/3/Easy-Way-to-Speak-to-Someone-at-EU-AIRLINE--The-Complete-Help-Guide.pdf
urop.gatech.edu	hxxps://urop[.]gatech[.]edu/sites/default/files/webform/thesis_approval_form_upload/_sid/_american-airlines-usa-a-step-by-step-guide.pdf
ctl.gatech.edu	hxxps://ctl[.]gatech[.]edu/sites/default/files/webform/teaching_with_technology_partner/_sid/_Hassle-Free-Way-to-Connect-EU-AIRLINE--Customer-Service-by-Phone-Live-Chat-Email-Options.pdf
regions-and-cities.europa.eu	hxxps://regions-and-cities[.]europa[.]eu/sites/default/files/webform/multimedia_center/_sid/_19%20Ways%20to%20Contact%20How%20Can%20I%20Talk%20To%20Someone%20at%20EU-AIRLINE%20%20Detailed%20Guide.pdf
submit.nal.usda.gov	hxxps://submit[.]nal[.]usda[.]gov/sites/default/files/supplementary/top-5-proven-techniques-to-connect-with-a-live-allegiant-airlines_0.pdf
cleanla.lacounty.gov	hxxps://cleanla[.]lacounty[.]gov/wp-content/uploads/sites/15/fusion-forms/bcd5edd4f4fe7361d44765d755213a2b.pdf
waterrights.utah.gov	hxxps://waterrights[.]utah[.]gov/pendingDocuments/20260905134910PM.pdf
www.nmhu.edu	hxxps://www[.]nmhu[.]edu/wp-content/uploads/wpforms/tmp/db4d3e4bc787515326955f1a664eb856.pdf
cityofpearidgear.gov	hxxps://cityofpearidgear[.]gov/wp-content/uploads/wpforms/tmp/2b993891ceac756f019dd0d55514a1b5.pdf
premiergranitetops.com	hxxps://premiergranitetops[.]com/wp-content/uploads/wpjobboard/application/tmp_s_1790091812-5190/field-9/united-modification-changes-and-corrections1.pdf
library.moody.edu	hxxps://library[.]moody[.]edu/contentassets/7d574363d49f47d7b61ead432bf2e4b1/asdfg-name-change-full-support-guidedee05_639244628633346922.pdf

Host	Example URL (defanged)
careers.pwd.org	hxxps://careers[.]pwd[.]org/sites/default/files/applicant/ana-519.pdf
posh.vip	hxxps://posh[.]vip/e/easy-access-faqs1888-274-1875-jetblue-customer-service-phone-chat-mail-guide
waterrights.utah.gov (Figure 4)	hxxps://waterrights[.]utah[.]gov/pendingDocuments/20260905104431AM.pdf

OTHER INDICATORS

- **Repository submission channel:** submitter identifier 2269ef75, API interface, US egress
- **Producer strings:** jsPDF 2.5.1; Skia/PDF m151 to m156 Google Docs Renderer; GPL Ghostscript 10.02.1 and 10.05.1; pdf-lib
- **Creator (workstation):** Mozilla/5.0 (Windows NT 10.0; Win64; x64) ... Chrome/151.0.0.0 Safari/537.36
- **Creator (custom tool):** ... pdf-automation-suite/1.0.0 Chrome/126.0.6478.234 Electron/31.7.7 Safari/537.36
- **Personas:** smith60221will and "Hakim" (Instagram); notchalen (ProBoards); "Booking.com customer complain helpdesk" (Facebook); customercomplainhelpdesk@gmail.com
- **Content strings:** "24/7 assistance in the U.S. and France"; brand bleed-through "PREMIA Airlines"

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Minato-ku, Tokyo 105-0001

ABOUT CHECK POINT EXPOSURE MANAGEMENT

Check Point's exposure management changes the game.

We combine billions of internal telemetry points with billions of external signals from the open, deep, and dark web to deliver a unified intelligence fabric. This provides clear visibility across the full attack surface, including brand risk.

The industry is moving from fragmented feeds to real context and real priorities. We support that shift through active threat validation, confirmation of compensating controls, and deduplication across tools, so teams can focus on what actually matters.

With safe-by-design remediation, fixes aren't just assigned, they're implemented. Every fix is validated before enforcement, enabling measurable risk reduction without downtime.

Gartner predicts organizations adopting continuous threat exposure management with mobilization will see 50% fewer successful attacks by 2028. We're leading that shift with action, not just tickets, and Fortune 500 organizations across major industries already rely on Check Point Exposure Management.

For more information visit: <https://www.checkpoint.com/exposure-management/>

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