

DPRK Employment Scam Network Targets Remote Tech Jobs

By Nisos

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Executive Summary

Nisos is tracking an IT worker employment scam network posing as Polish and US nationals with the goal of obtaining employment in remote engineering and full-stack blockchain developer roles. Threat actors in this network are using GitHub accounts, portfolio websites, freelancer accounts, and a global freelance software development company, Inspiration With Digital Living (IWDL), to trick companies into hiring them for full-time remote positions and project-based freelance jobs. This network is the first indication that possibly DPRK-affiliated IT workers are setting up fake freelance software development companies with legitimate looking websites to gain freelancer work.






Several indicators suggest that the network is likely affiliated with the Democratic People's Republic of Korea (DPRK). Nisos identified the following tactics, techniques, and procedures (TTPs) commonly attributed to DPRK employment fraud actors on the network's GitHub accounts, portfolio websites, and IWDL's website:

- GitHub accounts exhibited an unusual consistency in avatars, in this case many displayed similar lion-themed pictures.
- Personas within the network used similar email addresses, which frequently included the word "century" in their contact information.
- Portfolio websites exhibited an unusual consistency, suggesting that they were created from the same template with identical information.
- The same threat actor had accounts in different names attempting to gain employment.
- Profile photos were digitally manipulated. Threat actors' faces were often pasted on top of stock photos.
- The same persona was reused by different threat actors.




Lion-Themed GitHub Avatars

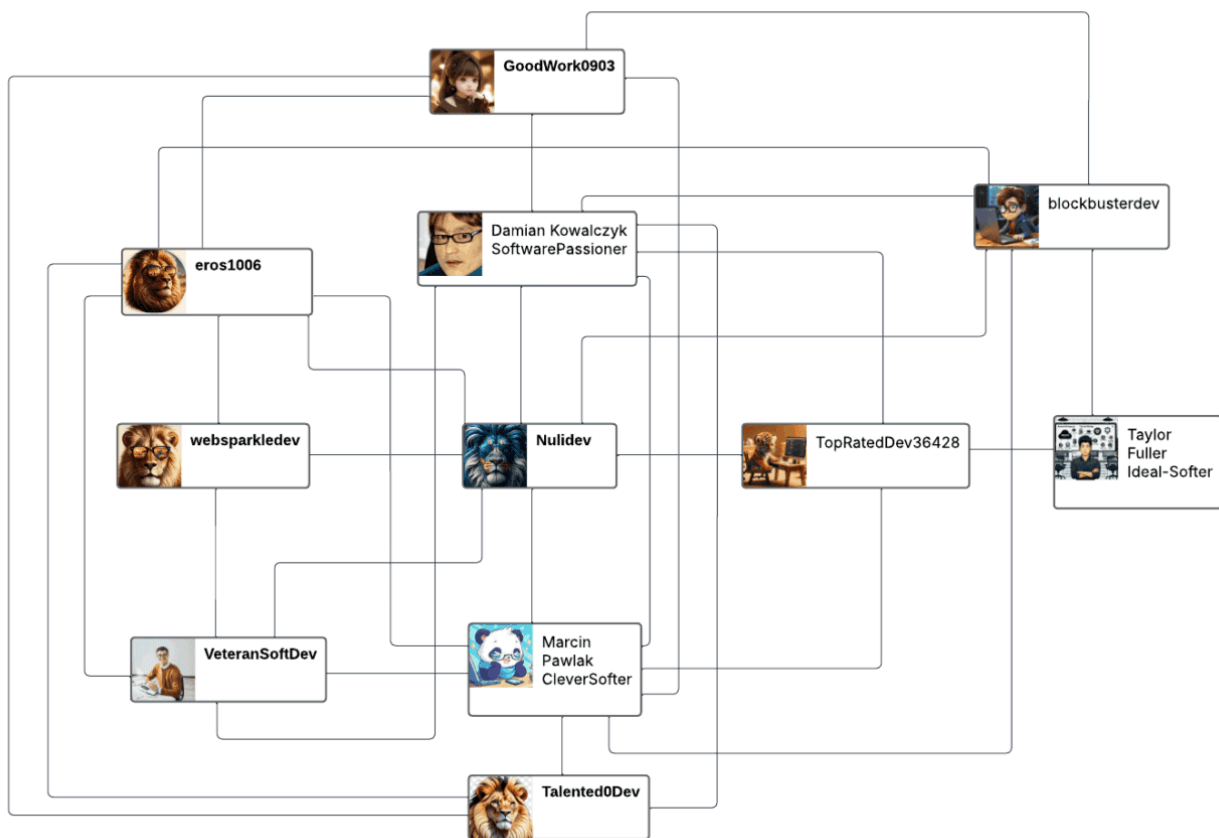
Nisos identified a network of GitHub accounts, which contained repositories for fake portfolio websites likely used to gain employment with unwitting companies. The portfolio websites linked to freelancer and professional networking platform accounts. On these accounts, threat actors claimed to be full-stack developers and engineers located in Poland and the United States looking for employment. Four of the eight most interconnected GitHub accounts in the network have animals as their avatars, three of which were lions. Nisos identified several other GitHub accounts sharing followers with the accounts within this network that also exhibited lion-themed avatars.

GitHub accounts of interest within the network include the following:

URL	Avatar
https://github.com/eros1006	
https://github.com/websparkledev	
https://github.com/TopRatedDev36428	
https://github.com/CleverSofter	
https://github.com/GoodWork0903	
https://github.com/VeteranSoftDev	
https://github.com/SoftwarePassioner	
https://github.com/Ideal-Softer	

Additional GitHub accounts linked to the network by following multiple of the accounts above include the following:

URL	Avatar
https://github[.]com/nulidev	
https://github[.]com/Talented0Dev	
https://github[.]com/blockbusterdev	



Graphic 1: Saja GitHub network connections.

Similar “Century” Email Address

Nisos found that three GitHub accounts and two portfolio websites within the network used email addresses that included the word “century.” We assess that the threat actors used the word to possibly distinguish the network

and accounts from other networks.

Email	GitHub URL	Portfolio Website URL
apollo21century@gmail[.]com	https://github[.]com/Ideal-Soft er	https://portfolio-ideal-softer.ver cel[.]app/contact
solomon21century@outlook[.]c om	https://github[.]com/GoodWork 0903	
erosnewcentury@gmail[.]com	https://github[.]com/websparkl edev	
apollo21century@gmail[.]com		https://cleversofter.github[.]io
apollo21century@gmail[.]com		https://softwarepassioner.githu b[.]io

Identical Portfolio Websites

Nisos found five active portfolio websites on GitHub[.]io and vercel[.]app and two inactive websites. The portfolio websites are mostly designed with identical elements, which include “about” sections, portfolios, and testimonials.

The portfolio websites associated within this network include the following:

- [https://veteransoftdev.github\[.\]io](https://veteransoftdev.github[.]io) (active)
- [https://softwarepassioner.github\[.\]io](https://softwarepassioner.github[.]io) (active)
- [https://cleversofter.github\[.\]io](https://cleversofter.github[.]io) (active)
- [https://goodwork0903.github\[.\]io](https://goodwork0903.github[.]io) (active)
- [https://portfolio-ideal-softer.vercel\[.\]app](https://portfolio-ideal-softer.vercel[.]app) (active)
- [https://dedicatedsoftwaredev.github\[.\]io](https://dedicatedsoftwaredev.github[.]io) (inactive)
- [https://seasonedsoftdev.github\[.\]io](https://seasonedsoftdev.github[.]io) (inactive)



Graphic 2: Example of a portfolio website. [1]

“About” Section

The “about” sections frequently included references to working 10+ years, having built an “Assistant for Freelancer,” and having completed more than 25 jobs.

About

Hello, I'm Jan Kowalski.

With **Bachelor's degree in software engineering & 10+ years experience from software internship to lead engineer**, if you'd like, I'm ready to go up with your business. I've **done 25+ jobs** full-time or part-time so far.

Especially, **As a team-leader** I've **built AFF(Assistant For Freelancer)**, with my 6 global colleagues. **Using this freelancer-support environment**, we(myself & 6 colleagues) became better to get success in freelancing **through freely-sharing experience, skills and information one another**.

How shall I support you?

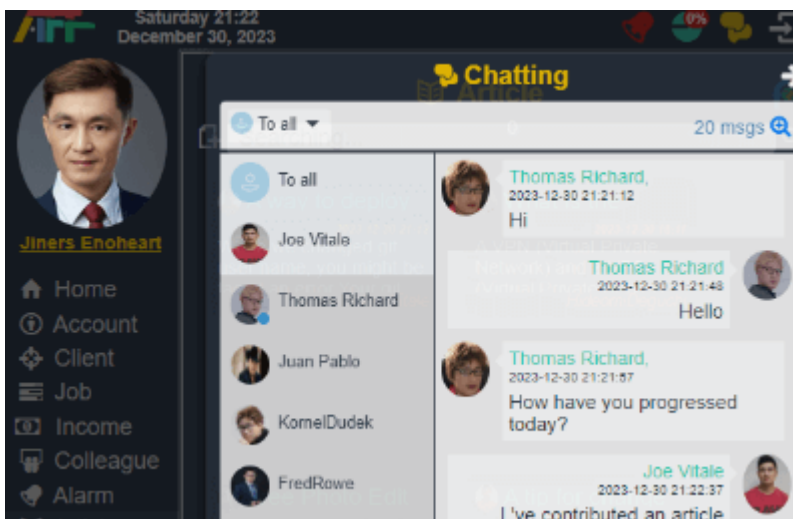
Graphic 3: Jan Kowalski’s about section in his portfolio website. [2]

“Portfolio” Section

The “portfolio” sections frequently referenced having worked on a service called “Assistant For Freelancer (AFF),” which was described as a private service supporting freelancers. Many portfolios also included work on the development of an “Anti-Game-Cheat engine focusing on AI components to detect cheating.”



Graphic 4: AFF portfolio example. [3]



Graphic 5: AFF portfolio example 2. [4]



Graphic 6: “Anti-Game-Cheat” engine portfolio example. [5]

“Testimonial” Section

The “testimonial” sections frequently contained fake testimonials from other personas included within the network and personas listed as examples in the AFF service screenshots on the portfolio websites. The personas included: Kornel Dudek, Fred Rowe, Juan Pablo Torres, and Thomas Richard.

Testimonials

“ He always emphasizes "First the solution, next the action". That's why I affectionately refer to him as the 'meticulous preparer. ”



Fred Rowe

“ A medida que paso más tiempo trabajando con él, noto que mejoro cada vez más. ”



Juan Pablo Torres

“ The key advantages lie in the creativity of the idea and the effectiveness of the solution. These are the significant benefits he brings to us. ”



Thomas Richard

Graphic 7: Testimonials section example. [6]

To obtain the complete research report, including endnotes, please click the button below.

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