Australian Government
Australian Security Intelligence Organisation

ASIO

Think before you link

Staff briefing pack

The threat

What?

Malicious actors using online platforms, apps, websites or emails to approach individuals

Why?

Recruitment of Australian and Western nationals to act as unwitting agents and provide them with sensitive intelligence

Who?

Those who:

- identify as an employee of the Australian Government;
- identify as working in the private sector or academia with access to classified or commercially sensitive technology or research, either directly or indirectly (such as the defence industry); or
- mention that they have a security clearance.

How?

- Initially engages the individual online, presenting a ‘unique’ business offer
- Asks for further information about the individual and may request a CV
- Attempts to move the individual away from the initial website or other communication platform
- Sets up phone calls or face-to-face discussions
- May invite the individual to another country to meet a representative

Why is this relevant to you?

As a staff member with access to sensitive data, you are a desirable target for malicious profiles.

- Potential consequences of engaging with malicious actors can be serious (for example, loss of security clearance, funding or intellectual property).
- Our staff are vulnerable to attack.
- Campaign resources are designed to help you protect yourselves and your organisation from being manipulated.

Know the signs!

Countering the threat

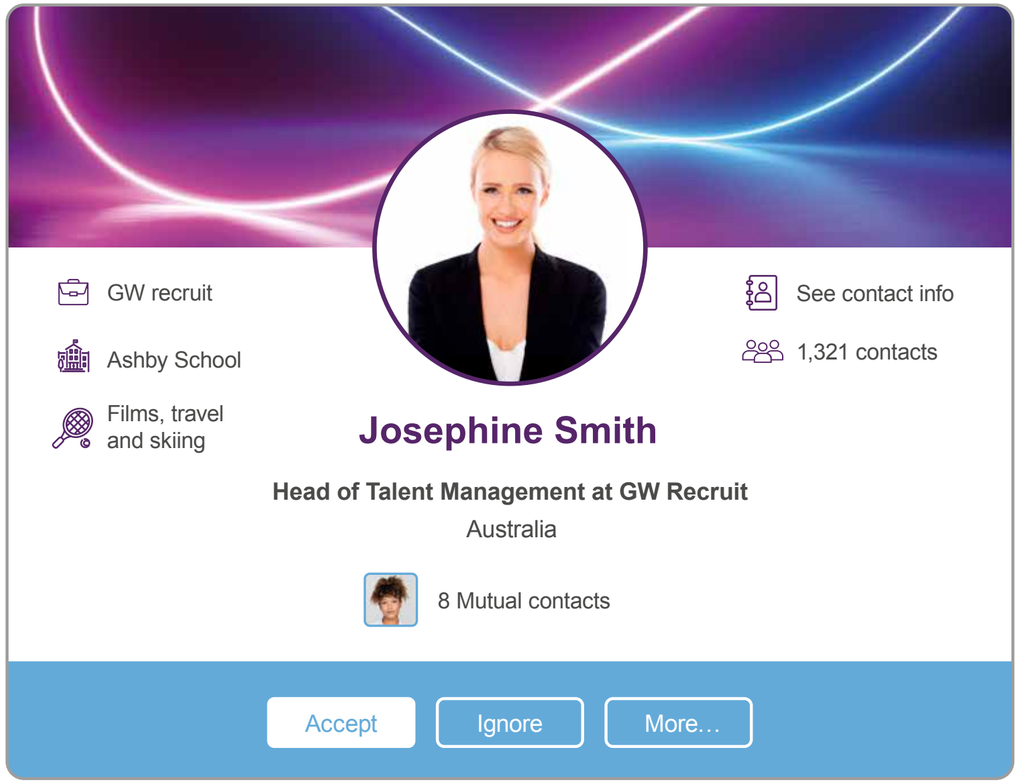
Recognise
the profile?

Realise
the potential threat

Report
to your security manager/adviser

Remove
them from your network

R ecognise the profile?



R ealise the threat

Genuine recruitment approaches

Not all genuine recruiters operate in the same way, but if you spot several of these signs, there's a good chance the approach is the real deal. The recruiter:

- progresses at the candidate's pace, not the recruiter's;
- validates you as a candidate;
- attempts to make life easier for the candidate; and
- manages the expectations of the candidate.

Realise the threat?

Illegitimate recruitment approaches

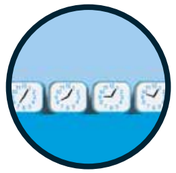
These are very reliable signs that the person approaching you is not genuine.

Too good to be true

Lack of depth or detail

Flattery

Imbalance



Urgency

Invitation to a foreign country

Scarcity of opportunity

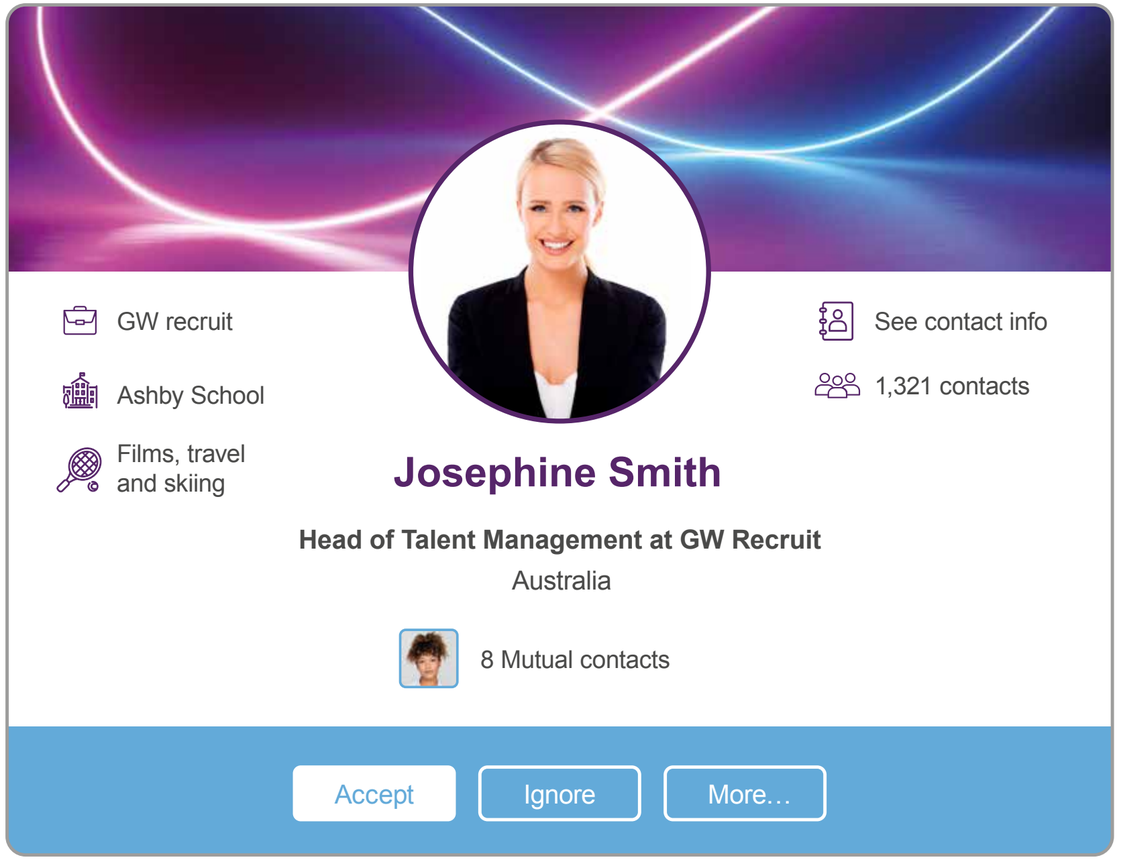
Personal vulnerabilities which they can exploit include:

- high workload and distractions;
- recent job or life changes (for example, unemployment or retirement); and
- your identity as a professional, and values such as being valued, respected and rewarded which they may appeal to.

Report to your security manager/adviser

- Do not engage.
- Report to your security manager/adviser or line manager, and include the following details:
  - the URL of the profile (if approached through a website)
  - a copy of the email or a screen shot of the message/request they sent
  - other relevant details
  - signs that made you suspect the profile was malicious.
- Do not engage any further with the profile.
- Be assured this matter will be treated with discretion and taken seriously.

Remove them from your network



Take-away messages

You can avoid making yourself a target online by:

- not advertising your security clearance publicly online;
- not revealing details of sensitive job roles or employers publicly or to unknown contacts;
- thinking about the lowest level of detail that you really need to include on your profile;
- using website settings to manage the information you put out about yourself, and to control who can view your profile; and
- sharing CVs or details of specific projects only with trusted and verified contacts.

For more information, talk to your security manager/adviser or visit:

www.asio.gov.au

www.cyber.gov.au

Any questions?