

Scamming and how to avoid it

By Sahil Patel

What is scamming?

-a fraudulent or deceptive act or operation(Merriam-Webster)



Scamming has increased in quantity and complexity

SCAMS IN AMERICA

**30% OF AMERICANS
HAVE BEEN SCAMMED
IN THE LAST 12 MONTHS**

On average lost **\$1,600**



48%
OF AMERICANS
ARE WORRIED
ABOUT FALLING
FOR SCAMS

40%

OF AMERICANS RECEIVE SUSPICIOUS
EMAILS, MESSAGES OR PHONE CALLS EVERY DAY

44%

DO NOT REPORT THE MESSAGES

All generations

are falling victim

SCAM VICTIMS

38% of Americans have been scammed in their lifetime



TOP SCAMS



FINANCIAL DIFFICULTIES CAUSED BY SCAM:

- 1 35% Set back on meeting financial goals
- 2 33% Inability to pay bills on time
- 3 31% Had to borrow money from loved ones

88% SAY THEIR SCAMMER WAS NEVER IDENTIFIED OR FACED CONSEQUENCES



11% HAVE SHARED PERSONAL OR FINANCIAL INFORMATION ONLINE WITH SOMEONE WHO TURNED OUT TO BE A SCAMMER

REPORTING SCAMS



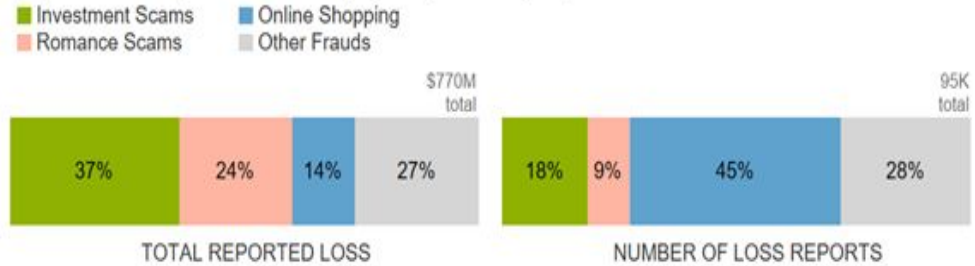
TOP REASONS WHY THEY DIDN'T REPORT THE SCAM:

- 1 35% Didn't feel like enough was lost to warrant a report
- 2 29% Not sure how to
- 3 15% Didn't want to

Scams can come in many different forms

Top frauds reported as originating on social media in 2021

While investment and romance scams topped the list on dollars lost, the largest number of reports came from people who said they were scammed trying to buy something they saw marketed on social media.



Figures based on fraud reports directly to the FTC identifying social media as the method of contact. Investment scams include the following fraud subcategories: art, gems and rare coin investments, investment seminars and advice, stocks and commodity futures trading, and miscellaneous investments.

Overall Top Ten Scams

	Scam Type	% of Total	Median Loss
1	Prizes/Sweepstakes/Free Gifts	35.23%	\$795
2	Internet: Gen Merchandise	19.58%	\$500
3	Phishing/Spoofing	17.49%	\$800
4	Fake Check Scams	5.59%	\$2,000
5	Friendship & Sweetheart Swindles	3.35%	\$925
6	Investments: Other (incl. cryptocurrency scams)	3.05%	\$1,750
7	Advance Fee Loans, Credit Arrangers	2.31%	\$700
8	Family/Friend Imposters	1.89%	\$775
9	Computers: Equipment/Software*	1.05%	\$1,100
10	Scholarships/Grants	1.02%	\$1,000



DATING & ROMANCE

Scammer uses fake profiles to lure you into a relationship, then asks for money or you to invest in something



INVESTMENT

Fake investment opportunities used by scammers to get you to hand over your money



BUYING OR SELLING

Fake online stores or classified ads to sell you a product or service that doesn't exist



REMOTE ACCESS

You are asked to hand over control of your device to fix a problem. Scammers may pretend to be from your local council, electricity or gas company, or internet/ phone provider.

TYPES OF SCAMS



FAKE CHARITIES

Often occurring after natural disasters or other major events, the scammer mimics genuine charities in an attempt to get your money and private information



PHISHING

Sending emails or other messages pretending to be from reputable companies in order to induce individuals to reveal personal information, such as passwords and credit card numbers.



TRAVEL, PRIZE & LOTTERIES

Tricks you into handing over personal information for you to receive a 'free' prize from a competition or lottery you never entered



JOB & EMPLOYMENT

The promise of a high-paying job that doesn't exist where you are asked to pay for your training. Also includes Ponzi or Pyramid Schemes

There is not a sure-fire way to prevent all scams, but there are many measures we can take to help avoid them

Top tips to avoid scams

Do not buy or rent from somebody that you do not know or have not checked out previously	Do not invest in a product or service that seems too good to be true	Keep your confidential information private	Do not wire cash
Be naturally skeptical	Educate those around you who are vulnerable to scams such as children or the elderly	Do not click on links or attachments if you do not know/trust the sender	Only donate to charities that you know

Avoid those who
lack credibility

CELEBRITY



Hacker HotList

Cybercriminals love celebrities too. **Think before you click.**

From deepfakes to crypto scams and malware, hackers are using famous names and AI to draw you in. Use caution when scrolling social media or searching for the latest celebrity news.

- 1 **Scarlett Johansson**
- 2 **Kylie Jenner**
- 3 **Taylor Swift**
- 4 **Anya Taylor-Joy**
- 5 **Tom Hanks**
- 6 **Sabrina Carpenter**
- 7 **Sydney Sweeney**
- 8 **Blake Lively**
- 9 **Johnny Depp**
- 10 **Addison Rae**



McAfee's Celebrity Hacker HotList is based on the number of malicious deepfakes, and the percentage of sites identified by McAfee WebAdvisor as risky when searching for a celebrity name and commonly associated terms. The analysis was conducted in September 2024 by McAfee Labs researchers. Fans may be tempted to fall for an online scam or be prone to downloading malware and encountering scams.

The Gift Card Scam is a common scam you could come in contact with

