

Outsmart the **scams**

Isn't the internet **great?**

Emailing, streaming, videoconferencing and shopping. Giving a chunk of your nest egg away to someone pretending to be your long-lost uncle in Shreveport. Wait, that one's not great at all. But it's happening more and more as online fraudsters up their games, targeting anyone who might fall victim. That's a tough pill, but one that with vigilance, you can avoid swallowing.

BETWEEN JUNE 2021 AND JUNE 2023, AMERICANS LOST¹:

\$2.7B

TO SOCIAL MEDIA SCAMS

\$2B

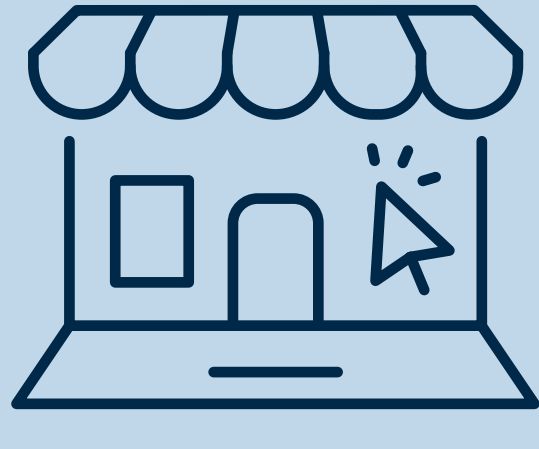
TO WEBSITE SCAMS

\$900M

TO EMAIL SCAMS

¹According to the Federal Trade Commission

HERE ARE SOME OF THE MANY RED FLAGS TO LOOK FOR, ALONG WITH TIPS FOR SIDESTEPPING THE HOAXES:



GOTTA-HAVES

Scammers love to advertise enticing products. Should you purchase via their fake social platforms or websites, your items never arrive.



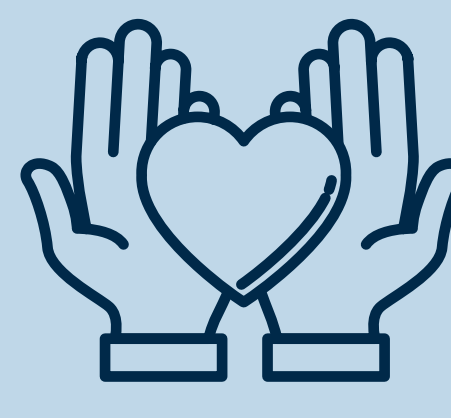
BAD GRAMMUR

Fraud bait often includes typos and strange spellings in account names, bios or URLs. If you see any, consider yourself a proofreading pro. Then run.



FALSE PROTECTION

Someone claiming to be with a financial institution says one of your accounts has been compromised, and that you should transfer funds to a different account. Offering to guide you through the process, their goal is to drain you.



GIVING TAKERS

Charity scams occur when thieves pose as entities seeking donations. If someone refuses to share details about their organization, their tax-exempt (EID) number or how your money will be used, they're probably not legit.



HEARTSTRING TUGS

Does someone you've recently met online seem eager to spark a friendship or romance? Have they said they're unable to connect in person, yet pleaded for money? Need we say more?

BE STINGY, PICKY & WISE

- ✓ Never provide your information to unknown third parties.
- ✓ Limit who can see your profile information and posts on social platforms.
- ✓ Work only with financial institutions that have fraud protection.
- ✓ Update passwords routinely.
- ✓ If you're unsure someone or something is real, search the name online and include words like "scam" and "complaints."
- ✓ Use multifactor authentication for all your accounts.
- ✓ Don't use cryptocurrency, gift cards or other hard-to-trace payment methods.

Sources: createwritenow.com; healthy.kaiserpermanente.org; simplyfiercely.com; tinybuddha.com; urmc.rochester.edu; vanillapapers.net

Report a **scam**

To easily find the right government agency or consumer organization to report a scam to, go to [usa.gov/where-report-scams](https://www.usa.gov/where-report-scams).

RAYMOND JAMES

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