

LOOKING FOR LOVE IN ALL THE WRONG PLACES

A review of the latest security threats and how you can avoid them



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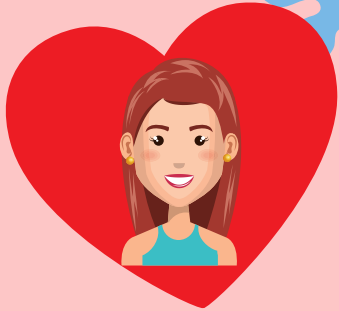
Love can be a fickle thing. Navigating the battlefield of creating new relationships is challenging enough, but another challenge lurks within - **romance scammers**. Scammers thrive in these environments, where their victims come to them, instead of the other way around.

Using catfishing skills, they create fake personas and then practice their social engineering tricks to build a connection. Once the connection is strong enough, they begin requesting cash either to help pay for their travel expenses to meet or an unexpected expense they can't cover.

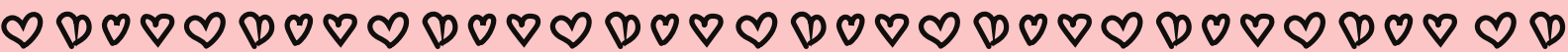
Let's explore the art of a romance scam to learn about how they work, and what to be on the lookout for.

It's Time to Play...

The Social (Engineering) Game



Watch as our bachelorette Amber attempts to find true love among our three contestants. Will blind love prevail, or will our bachelorette sense an issue?



Bachelor #1: Ahmed Authority

About Me: Amber, I am a top government official and I can tell you have not been complying with our laws. If you don't pick me, we will terminate your work employment and arrest you for your crimes.



In the social engineering tactic of authority, scammers convince their target that they are a high-ranking official in hopes they will comply with their demands. Watch for threatening language and boasts about their position.



Bachelorette #2: Rachel Reciprocity

About Me: I'd be the best match for you because I'd shower you with gifts! Free trips, gift cards, electronics, and more! Just pick me and all this free stuff will be yours!

Reciprocity revolves around offering free gifts or information as the bait. If something seems too good to be true, it probably is.



Bachelor #3: Peter Pretexter

About Me: Hi Amber, I think you should pick me because I'm genuinely interested in learning more about who you really are! So tell me about yourself, do you have any pets? What's your favorite kind of music? What is the funniest password you've ever used for an account?



Scammers use the method of pretexting to gather sensitive information without raising much suspicion. Slow the conversation down and think twice before divulging anything personal or private.

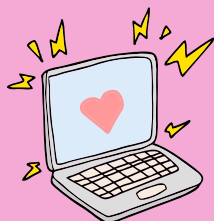


We hope Amber can spot the red flags with these potential suitors. Always be aware of social engineering tactics both on and off dating sites.

Critic's Corner - Romance



We asked Zach, a self-proclaimed movie buff, to put together his list of the best romance films. Are you a fan, or do you think it's a scam? Let's take a look at some of his top picks.



The Nigerian Princess Bride

This classic love story tells the tale of a wealthy Nigerian Princess searching for her true love. Before her wealth and love can be unlocked, her suitor must pass a series of tests to prove their love such as sending gift cards or giving out their banking information.

Famous line: You need \$5,000 for emergency surgery? As you wish!



There's Something About Gary

Gary's online profile has made him a hot commodity on dating applications. Smart, handsome, down-to-earth, great job - he seems to have it all. When Selma and Gary make a connection, she thinks this must be too good to be true. Has Selma found her soulmate, or hooked a Catfish?

Famous line: We are destined to be together... but not now, I'm moving overseas for work!



How to Scam a Guy in 10 Days

Lauren knows the ins and outs of social engineering. She's perfected the art of scamming her victims and getting what she wants in 10 days or less. Things are going great until she meets Nick. Can he break the trend so they both can find love?

Famous line: You had me at gift cards!

Celebrating Black History Month

To celebrate Black History Month, we are honoring some all-stars who positively contribute to improving the culture of cybersecurity.



Larry Whiteside Jr

Larry has compiled over 20 years of experience in the fields of cybersecurity and risk management. His knowledge and skills have helped a multitude of companies experience hypergrowth while protecting their data from external threats. Larry is the co-founder and vice president of the not-for-profit International Consortium of Minority Cybersecurity Professionals (ICMCP) whose goal is to increase the representation of women and minorities in cybersecurity.

<https://www.cybersecuritysummit.org/speakers/larry-whiteside-jr/>



Camille Stewart

Camille was the recipient of a 2019 Cyber Security Women of the Year honor, and for good reason. Camille brings her experience as an attorney to address many cyber-related policy issues. A former Senior Policy Advisor for Cyber, Infrastructure & Resilience Policy at the U.S. Department of Homeland Security and now the current Head of Security Policy for Google Play and Android. Camille serves on the Board of Directors for GirlSecurity, an organization focused on empowering young women with the training, education, and experience towards prosperous careers in security.

<https://www.camillestewart.com/attorney>

SCAM OF THE MONTH

Each month we highlight a REAL scam that was submitted to our security team. We highlight these real examples of tactics criminals are using RIGHT NOW, that way you'll be better prepared when the next scam hits.

Martha is a 62-year-old recent widow, who turned toward online dating sites for a love connection. She is stunned when she is matched up with Bernie Jupiter, the young and handsome musician famous for his hit "Downtown Junk". Martha thought he would be out of her league but the two hit it off and Bernie quickly professed his love for Martha. As their relationship continued, Bernie began asking Martha for money to help pay some of his tour expenses, which he promised to pay back. Martha agreed and wired \$50,000 to an account under someone else's name. Bernie continued asking for more money until Martha realized she was being scammed.



Did you spot the red flags?

- ▶ Martha matched with Bernie whom she thought would be way out of her league.
- ▶ Bernie professed his love for Martha very quickly into their relationship.
- ▶ Bernie requested \$50,000 from Martha to be wired to a strange account in someone else's name.



Martha matched with a famous celebrity. Although not impossible, this tactic is common as cybercriminals have more images and know more details about a celebrity, making them easier to impersonate. This is generally referred to as Catfishing, which is the creation of a fake or unauthorized persona to lure someone into a relationship.



Catfishing can be difficult to spot but look for warning signs like a refusal to meet in person or video chat. They often profess their love quickly or begin asking for money. Do some research on the person you think you are talking to and see if their story matches up. If it sounds too good to be true, it probably is.



Romance Scams hit record highs across the globe in 2020. You may not be looking for love or browsing some of these social sites right now, but there's a good chance you know someone who is. Educate your loved ones on these scams and speak up if you sense something is fishy.

FALLING IN LOVE WITH CYBERSECURITY

Key Takeaways

Although there are clear risks with online dating services and applications, these connection tools can still be safe when used properly. Keep your wits about you and always be cautious when things seem too good to be true.



Social Engineering tactics such as **pretexting**, **reciprocity**, and **authority** will continue to be used by successful scammers both on and off dating sites. Know the warning signs and when to slow down the conversation.



Don't get caught in a bad romance. Scammers *thrive* on dating applications because they can hide behind their fake personas and use social engineering tactics to lure in their victims.



If your not in the market for love right now, you may know someone who is. Pass on your knowledge to others to keep them safe and speak up if something doesn't seem right.

Cybersecurity Crosswords

ACROSS

2. Social engineering tactic that commonly uses threats
5. The art of creating a fake or unauthorized persona
6. Scammers may confess this after building trust
7. These types of scams hit record highs in 2020
8. Offering free gifts or information as bait

DOWN

1. Gathering sensitive data subtly
3. Manipulation of an individual into divulging sensitive information, Social _____
4. First name of the woman serving on the Board of Directors for GirlSecurity and 2019 Cyber Security Woman of the Year
9. Catfishers may pose as this, since they have more images and know more details about the target

