



Scam Prevention Begins with YOU! Educate yourself on the latest techniques scammers are using to steal your money!

What is Artificial Intelligence (AI)?

What is Cryptocurrency?

It's important to know about the latest scams, but more important to know the red flags to keep your money and identity secure!

Scams haven't changed; just the techniques the scammers are using. Technology is forever progressing, improving efficiency in many beneficial ways, but also improving efficiency in the ways we are being scammed.

Artificial Intelligence (AI) and digital currency, or cryptocurrency, are the nuances scammers are now using, giving them complete autonomy and making it very difficult or almost impossible for law enforcement to investigate, much less make an arrest.

It's getting tougher and tougher for anyone to determine the difference in legitimate and non-legitimate communication, whether it is a text, email, phone call or letter. Let's be honest, probably most people, whatever age, have a hard time telling the difference, and thanks to this new technology, it makes it almost impossible.

What is Artificial Intelligence (AI) and how are these scammers using it?

Voice cloning uses AI to replicate someone else's voice. Scammers use voice cloning to convince you to believe you are talking with a family member or friend. If you get a call from someone you know, but don't recognize the number, or they're calling at a time they don't normally call, ask them a question that only the real person would know. If they don't know the answer, hang up immediately.

What is Cryptocurrency?

According to the **Federal Trade Commission**, the definition of cryptocurrency is a type of digital currency that generally exists only electronically. You usually use your phone, computer, or a cryptocurrency ATM to buy cryptocurrency.

- Cryptocurrency accounts are **NOT** backed by a government, such as banks who are insured by the Federal Deposit Insurance Corporation (FDIC).
- Cryptocurrency values change constantly.

Why are scammers asking for money to be sent through cryptocurrency?

- Because cryptocurrency does not have the same legal protections as credit cards or debit cards.
- Cryptocurrency payments typically are **NOT** reversible and very, very hard to trace.

What to do if you are asked to send money through cryptocurrency. DON'T DO IT!

According to the Federal Trade Commission:

- No legitimate business or government will ever email, text, or message you on social media to ask for money, and they will never demand that you buy or pay with cryptocurrency.
- Don't pay anyone who contacts you unexpectedly, demanding payment with cryptocurrency.
- **Only scammers demand payment in cryptocurrency.**
- Only scammers will guarantee profits or big returns. Don't trust people who promise you can quickly and easily make money in the crypto markets.
- **NEVER MIX ONLINE DATING AND INVESTMENT ADVICE.** If you meet someone on a dating site or app, and they want to show you how to invest in crypto, or ask you to send them crypto, that's a scam.

Charles Schwab's opinion on investing in cryptocurrency found online at the link below:

<https://www.schwab.com/learn/story/cryptocurrencies-should-you-invest-them>

Whether you should invest in individual cryptocurrencies or derivative products depends on your goals, risk tolerance, and other investing considerations just as it would be with any other asset or security. **We suggest clients approach cryptocurrency as a speculative investment outside traditional asset allocation models and consider the high volatility and risks involved.**

6 Top Scams to Watch Out for in 2024

By Patrick J. Kiger, AARP

This article is not exactly as the author has written; some parts have been left out or paraphrased.

1. “Check cooking” scam

In 2023, there was a surge of thieves stealing checks from postal boxes, mailboxes and mail carriers, and then washing the checks with chemicals, leaving only the signature. The thief would then change the payee and amount of the check allowing them to cash the check, usually for thousands of dollars.

Now in 2024, the thieves have discovered an easier way to steal. In **check cooking**, thieves take a digital picture of a stolen check and then use commercially available software to alter it.

If you still choose to write paper checks, use the following cautions:

- **Drop it off at the post office, instead of a mailbox.**
- **Continually monitor your bank account and immediately report suspicious transactions.**

2. Voiceprint scams

This is where **AI technology** is used. Thieves capture a recording of your voice and use a software program to generate an imitation “deepfake” version that can be used to impersonate you. They call your bank and request money be sent elsewhere. To prevent this from happening, AARP recommends you:

- Don’t answer the phone, unless you know the person calling you, and even then make sure you know who you are talking to.

3. Delayed-action sweepstakes scam

Sweepstakes scams have been around for a long time. In the past, scammers ask victims to send money for taxes before the award can be delivered. Now, the scammers are asking for banking information and social security number, explaining they will file with the IRS for you. Surprise, you’re now a victim of Identity Theft. Scammers will start making small deductions from your bank accounts to see if you notice, then move to larger deductions. They also use your information to obtain credit cards and lines of credit in your name that can give them a bigger pay day down the road. If you get one of these calls, remember:

- If it seems too good to be true, it probably is!
- If you get a call from someone claiming that you’ve won a huge prize, the safest bet is to just hang up. And never, ever provide any personal information.

4. Virtual celebrity scam

Fans have become accustomed to constant virtual intimacy with celebrities through social media. If you’re on Facebook or Instagram, and someone pretending to be Celine Dion or her manager reaches out to you, it is more than likely an imposter. For example, if it’s a fake manager, they may say that Celine loves your comments and would love to talk to you. Here’s her private account, but after you connect to it, the talk gradually turns to how her fortune is tied up and she could use a \$50,000 loan from you. If you get a direct message from someone claiming to be a famous performer or superstar athlete, or someone representing them, **be very, very skeptical. It’s almost certain to be a scam!**

5. Multi-stage grandparent scam

This well know scam is still around, but more sophisticated. Scammers set up call centers with young people posing as grandchildren who have been jailed after a car accident. They are paid for every grandparent they connect with and give a case number to, instructing the grandparent to provide that number to the defense attorney or local prosecutor when they talk to them. When the grandparent calls back, the scammers say, “Oh, do you have the case number?” It is a psychological trick to see whether the grandparent is compliant and will follow instructions to send thousands or even tens of thousands of dollars.

6. Paris Olympics scams

Criminals try to find ways to exploit big events that are in the news. With the Paris games coming up this summer, more than likely we will begin to see the revival of the fake emergency scam, which bears similarities to the grandparent scam. It could work something like this: A scammer hacks someone’s email account, and shortly after, all of that person’s contacts will receive the same message—something to the effect of, “Hey guys, I’m over in Paris and my wallet was stolen! Can anyone please help me out by sending gift cards or a Venmo deposit?”

Olympic Officials are also warning ticket seekers to avoid bogus ticketing sites and scam emails purporting to be from Paris2024.org (the official website for the games) or the Olympic committee.

Success! Scammer Caught, Arrested, Extradicted and Prosecuted!

Man admits to identity theft scheme that took thousands from local senior citizens

Hassan Forde pled guilty on August 31, 2023 to (2) counts of Identity Fraud, (1) count of theft from persons in a protected class, (1) count of receiving stolen property and (1) count of forgery. Judge Michael Oster, Jr. sentenced Forde to 5–7.5 years in prison and ordered Forde to pay restitution in the amount of \$59,062, which has been paid to victims through the Adult Probation Department.

Assistant Prosecutor Garrett Baker, Chief of the Crimes Against the Elderly and Economic Crimes Division, worked diligently with Westchester County District Attorneys' office in Upstate New York to apprehend Forde.

Forde was so brazen about his success at stealing from innocent victims, many of them seniors, that he posted the following pictures on Facebook.



How to Keep This From Happening to You

- Mail checks inside the post office, not in an outside mailbox.
- Use indelible black ink gel pens.
- Use certified mail or delivery service with tracking for important checks.
- Monitor bank accounts and credit reports regularly for signs of fraud.
- **Immediately** report lost or stolen checks to the bank or credit union.
- Place a "stop payment" order on a check if it's lost or stolen.

How to Report a Scam

- If your bank account has been compromised, contact your financial institution immediately!
- It is important to make a report to your local police department.
- Also, you can report the scam to the Federal Trade Commission (FTC) at, <https://reportfraud.ftc.gov>.
- You may also contact the Ohio Attorney Generals' Office at 1-800-282-0515.
- And/or you can report a scam to the **Butler County Crimes Against the Elderly SCAM** hotline at, 1-888-662-3673.

Four Signs that it is a Scam!

1. Scammers PRETEND to be from an organization you know.

Scammers often pretend to be contacting you on behalf of the government. They might use a real name, like the FTC, Social Security Administration, IRS, Medicare, or make up a name that sounds official. Some pretend to be from a business you know, like a utility company, a tech company, or even a charity asking for donations. They use technology to change the phone number that appears on your caller ID. So the name and number you see might not be real.

2. Scammers say there's a PROBLEM or a PRIZE.

They might say you're in trouble with the government. Or you owe money. Or someone in your family had an emergency. Or there's a virus on your computer. Some scammers say there's a problem with one of your accounts and that you need to verify personal information. Others will lie and say you won money in a lottery or sweepstakes but have to pay a fee to get it. Or give your personal information so they can

contact the IRS for you and report your winnings before you can receive your money.

3. Scammers PRESSURE you to act immediately.

Scammers want you to act before you have time to think. If you're on the phone, they might tell you not to hang up so you can't check out their story.

4. Scammers tell you to PAY in a specific way.

They often insist that you can only pay by using cryptocurrency, wiring money through a company like MoneyGram or Western Union, using a payment app, or putting money on a gift card and then giving them the numbers on the back of the card. ALL METHODS THAT ARE ESSENTIALLY IMPOSSIBLE TO RECOUP YOUR MONEY.

Some will send you a check (that will later turn out to be fake), then tell you to deposit it and send them money, instructing you to keep a portion for your trouble. When the check is returned as fraudulent, you are responsible for repayment of the check.

Be Very, Very Cautious when Communicating with Someone on a Dating Site!

- **Scammers say they can't meet you in person.** They might say they're living or traveling outside the country, working on an oil rig, in the military, or working with an international organization.
- **Scammers will ask you for money.** Once they gain your trust, they'll ask for your help to pay medical expenses (for them or a family member), buy their ticket to visit you, pay for their visa, or help them pay fees to get them out of trouble. They may even offer to help you get started in cryptocurrency investing.
- **Scammers will tell you how to pay.** All scammers, not just romance scammers, want to get your money quickly. And they want your money in a way that makes it hard for you to get it back. They'll tell you to wire money through a company like Western Union or MoneyGram, put money on gift cards (like Amazon, Google Play, iTunes, or Steam) and give them the PIN codes, send money through a money transfer app, or transfer cryptocurrency.

FASTER PAYMENT MEANS FASTER FRAUD!

This information was copied from the website below, where you can also find much more on the warning signs of a scam.

<https://consumer.ftc.gov/articles/what-know-about-romance-scams#lies>

**This is a
romance scam:**
Someone you haven't
met in person asks
you for money.

ftc.gov/PassItOn
#OlderAmericansMonth



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