

## Email scams

E-commerce as well as goods and business advertising through the Internet offer great development chances to many firms, and are highly convenient for customers. But the net also represents an opportunity for all kinds of cheaters.

All over the world frauds to the detriment of Internet users through email messages are increasing. Generally cheaters steal small sums to individual users, but the huge number of scams they commit offers them the opportunity to make a lot of money illicitly.

Most frequent scams committed through the Internet (usually by sending an email):

**Fake auction sales on the web**, offering goods which will never be sent to the customer or with inflated prices;

**Offer of free services on the Internet** that turn out to be chargeable, or failure to supply services which you have paid for or supply of services different from those advertised;

**Sale of hardware and software by online catalogues**, involving items never sent or different from those advertised;

**Pyramidal investment schemes** and multilevel business;

**Business and franchising** opportunities;

**Work-at-home scam** may require the eventual purchase of materials, equipment and training in order to assemble the work product.

**Money loan** (which are never granted) may require payment of an advance fee;

**False promises of removing negative information in order to get a loan** (for example, clearing of names from a black list);

**False promises of issuing (upon request of paying a commission) a credit card** to users having a bad record;

**PayPerCall lines (such as 899)** to discover a fake secret admirer or a mysterious win (holidays, items);

Most of the times **the attempted fraud starts by sending an email to the potential victim**. If you have any suspicions, save the email and inform the police as soon as possible;

As a matter of fact, most adults and expert "surfers" have learned to be cautious when interacting with strangers. This caution is generally enough to avoid unpleasant surprises.

**If you become friends with someone in a chat room** and you decide to meet him/her personally, fix

your first date in a public and crowded place. Not going to a meeting alone constitutes a sufficient precaution to avoid unpleasant surprises.

**Things change when children are involved.** Their curiosity, together with their naivety, may put them at risk, as they can be approached on the net by someone having bad intentions, such as paedophiles. For this reason, we recommend parents to accompany their children when netsurfing and encourage them always to tell about their surfing experiences.

29/03/2011