

Online romance fraud is on the increase

19th March, 2021



Authorities are urging those looking for love on the Internet to be cautious. There was a 20 per cent spike in online romance fraud last year. The organisation UK Finance reported that cyber fraud increased considerably and coincided with a rise in

the number of people looking for a partner online. This has been exacerbated by feelings of loneliness and isolation during the coronavirus pandemic. There was a sharp rise in the number of scams related to dating sites and around Valentine's Day. UK Finance said: "Romance scams can leave customers out of love and out of pocket." It warned: "Romance scammers can be very convincing by forming an emotional attachment with their victims."

The Online Dating Association in the UK reported that around 2.3 million British citizens used dating apps during lockdown. Cyber criminals have taken advantage of this to scam people. A total of \$26 million is believed to have been lost in bank transfer fraud. The average loss per victim is around \$11,000. According to data from a UK bank, people aged 55 to 64 are the most vulnerable to romance fraud. Pauline Smith, a fraud expert, said: "Any online platform that allows you to connect with and talk to other people could be targeted by romance fraudsters, so it's important to remain vigilant." She urged extreme caution if an online love interest requests money for things like medical care.

Sources:
computerweekly.com / bbc.com / infosecurity-magazine.com

Writing

Online is the best place to find love. Discuss.

Chat

Talk about these words from the article.

authorities / Internet / cautious / cyber fraud / partner / online / pandemic / love / dating / lockdown / criminals / bank transfer / data / romance / expert / vigilant

True / False

- a) The article says people looking for love need to be caustic. T / F
- b) Cases of online romance fraud increased by 20% last year. T / F
- c) Coronavirus led to a drop in people dating online. T / F
- d) The article said scams can leave victims out of pocket. T / F
- e) Around 2.3 million people worldwide used dating apps during lockdown. T / F
- f) The average loss from romance fraud is around \$11,000 per victim. T / F
- g) A fraud expert urged people to be valiant when they are online. T / F
- h) The fraud expert said people who lose money should seek medical care. T / F

Synonym Match

(The words in **bold** are from the news article.)

- | | |
|------------------------|---------------|
| 1. authorities | a. increase |
| 2. spike | b. target |
| 3. considerably | c. help |
| 4. scam | d. officials |
| 5. attachment | e. greatly |
| 6. during | f. specialist |
| 7. victim | g. bond |
| 8. expert | h. watchful |
| 9. vigilant | i. fraud |
| 10. care | j. throughout |

Discussion – Student A

- a) What do you think about what you read?
- b) What do you think of dating apps?
- c) What do you think of scammers?
- d) What do you do to keep safe online?
- e) What do you think of online romance?
- f) How vigilant are you online?
- g) What is the best romantic movie you have seen?
- h) What questions would you like to ask the fraud expert?

Phrase Match

- | | |
|------------------------------------|------------------------------|
| 1. There was a 20 per cent spike | a. by feelings of loneliness |
| 2. This has been exacerbated | b. fraudsters |
| 3. out of | c. with their victims |
| 4. Romance scammers can be very | d. advantage of this |
| 5. forming an emotional attachment | e. vigilant |
| 6. British citizens used dating | f. in online romance fraud |
| 7. criminals have taken | g. apps during lockdown |
| 8. The average loss per | h. convincing |
| 9. targeted by romance | i. victim is around \$11,000 |
| 10. it's important to remain | j. pocket |

Discussion – Student B

- How romantic are you?
- What is the most romantic thing you have ever done?
- What do you think of online dating?
- How worried are you about online fraud?
- What are the signs that a mail or site might be a scam?
- How have you felt during the coronavirus pandemic?
- Has romance ever left you out of pocket?
- How important is romance to you?

Spelling

- Authorities are ruigng those looking for love
- to be ucitaous
- icnoicedd with a rise
- ceberaatxed by feelings of loneliness
- scammers can be very nvnicconig
- forming an emotional tahcamtnet
- taken vnadtagae of this
- The veraage loss per victim
- the most unvareblle
- a fraud xeeprt
- it's important to remain gvliiant
- She urged xtremee caution

Answers – Synonym Match

1. d	2. a	3. e	4. i	5. g
6. j	7. b	8. f	9. h	10. c

Role Play

Role A – Italian Restaurant

You think an Italian restaurant is the best place for a romantic date. Tell the others three reasons why. Tell them what is wrong with their places. Also, tell the others which is the least romantic of these (and why): the beach, a museum or a shopping mall.

Role B – Beach

You think the beach is the best place for a romantic date. Tell the others three reasons why. Tell them what is wrong with their places. Also, tell the others which is the least romantic of these (and why): an Italian restaurant, a museum or a shopping mall.

Role C – Museum

You think a museum is the best place for a romantic date. Tell the others three reasons why. Tell them what is wrong with their places. Also, tell the others which is the least romantic of these (and why): the beach, an Italian restaurant or a shopping mall.

Role D – Shopping Mall

You think a shopping mall is the best place for a romantic date. Tell the others three reasons why. Tell them what is wrong with their places. Also, tell the others which is the least romantic of these (and why): the beach, a museum or an Italian restaurant.

Speaking – Romantic Dates

Rank these with your partner. Put the most romantic dates at the top at the top. Change partners often and share your rankings.

- | | |
|----------------------|-----------------|
| • Italian restaurant | • Museum |
| • Online | • Cinema |
| • Beach | • Along a river |
| • Amusement park | • Shopping mall |

Answers – True False

a	F	b	T	c	F	d	T	e	F	f	T	g	F	h	F
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Answers to Phrase Match and Spelling are in the text.