

Hacked E-Mail Scams, Real Estate Scams and Other Scam Variations

International financial scams evolve constantly. The goal of this brochure is not to describe every possible scam variation, but to make potential victims aware of a variety of hoaxes that exist.

Hacked E-mail/ Social Networking Scams

In hacked e-mail scams, scammers access a victim's e-mail inbox – generally a free e-mail service such as Yahoo, Hotmail, or Gmail. In most cases, the true owner of the e-mail account gave his or her account information and password to the scammer in response to an official-looking request, supposedly from the site administrators. The scammer then changes the account password, locking the true account owner out of his or her inbox. The scammer then pretends to be the true owner of the account and sends messages to everyone in the victim's inbox or address book, saying he or she is in trouble abroad. The e-mail messages ask for financial assistance to get home.

This scam also sometimes uses the victim's "friend list" on Facebook, MySpace, or Twitter to solicit funds from friends and family.

Sample Hacked E-mail Solicitation Letter:

Subject: Emergency!!! I need your help...

How are you doing? I am sorry I didn't inform you about my traveling for a Missionary program. It is currently held in Nigeria, Sweden and Kenya. I am presently in Nigeria. It has been a very sad and bad moment for me because I got robbed on my way to the hotel where I lodged. My ID, credit card, cash and other valuable I have with me got stolen. I contacted the embassy here to help me out but it will take some time to get back to me. I urgently need your financial assistance. The total sum of money that I would need would be \$2,700 to sort out my hotel bills and get myself back home. I will appreciate your help, I promise I will pay back upon my return, Let me know if you can assist me so that I can send you the details to use when sending the money through western union.

Peace & Joy. Hope to year from you soon.

(signed)

Real Estate Scams

Scammers often take advantage of Craigslist and other free classified listings to defraud victims. In one scam, the scammers visit a legitimate real estate's website and then re-list the properties on Craigslist, complete with the addresses and photos of the rental properties. The scammers then answer e-mail inquiries about the properties and collect rental applications and credit check fees from the would-be tenants.

Victims of this scam should review our brochure on [Resources for Victims of International Financial Scams](#).