

Scams are one of the most common types of fraudulent – nigerian scams

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Nigerian Scams - 419 Scam Information Nigerian, or " 419", scams are one of the most common types of fraudulent email currently hitting inboxes.

Nigerian scam messages can also arrive via fax or letter. The messages generally claim that your help is needed to access a large sum of money, usually many millions of dollars. In fact, this money does not exist. The messages are an opening gambit designed to draw potential victims deeper into the scam.

Those who initiate a dialogue with the scammers by replying to a Nigerian scam message will eventually be asked for advance fees supposedly required to allow the deal to proceed. They may also become the victims of identity theft. The so-called " Nigerian scam" is one of the longest running that I know about. In fact, it predates the Internet and email. The scams are also known as " 419 scams" after the appropriate part of the Nigerian criminal code. The scammers still use surface mail and faxes as well as email.

There are a great many versions of this scam. Although many originate out of Nigeria, hence the generic term " Nigerian scam", it is certainly not only Nigerian based criminals that send them. In spite of the longevity of this type of scam and the large amounts of publicity that it has received, many people around the world are still being conned out of substantial sums of money. I regularly receive enquiries from Internet users who have received Nigerian scam emails and do not know what they are about. Basically, the scam works like this.

You receive an unsolicited message that masquerades as some manner of business proposition, request for assistance, notice of a potential inheritance, or opportunity to help a charity. In fact, there is a seemingly endless array of cover stories that the scammers use in order to draw potential victims into the con. In spite of this diversity, virtually all of the scam messages share a common theme. The messages all claim that your help is needed to access a large sum of money, usually many millions of dollars.

The scammers use a variety of stories to explain why they need your help to access the funds. For example: * They may claim that political climate or legal issues preclude them from accessing funds in a foreign bank account. * They may claim that your last name is the same as that of the deceased person who owned the account and suggest that you act as the Next of Kin of this person in order to gain access to the funds. * They may claim that a rich businessman, who has a terminal illness, needs your help to distribute his wealth to charity.

The messages offer to let you keep a significant percentage of the funds in question in exchange for your assistance. This percentage is the bait that the scammers use to entice potential victims deeper into the scam. Once a recipient has taken the bait, and initiated a dialogue with the scammers, he or she will soon receive requests for " fees" that the scammer claims are necessary for processing costs, tax and legal fees, or bribes to local officials.

The scammers will warn the victim that these advance fees need to be paid before the funds can be procured. In reality, the supposed funds do not exist.

The major purpose of these scam messages is to trick recipients into parting with their money in the form of these advance fees. Fraudulent requests for fees will usually continue until the victim realizes he or she is being conned and stops sending money. In some cases, the scammers gain enough information to access the victim's bank account directly or steal the victim's identity.