



Any human activity is exploited by fraudsters feathering their own nest regardless of any hurt caused.

They adapted their activities to exploit the world of computing. They use the existence of the Web and Internet to swindle those who are not familiar with their criminal ways. Their easiest victims are those unfamiliar with computers or do not know how to recognize scams.

A scam is a ruse to defraud. Scams have been around for generations. To get a feel for how they work, download "The Little Book of BIG Scams" from www.met.police.uk/docs/little_book_scam.pdf

There are a few scams that have cropped up since the book was published and are now going the rounds.

A 'popular' one at the moment is a phone call from someone pretending to be from Microsoft. The caller says that Microsoft is aware of a problem with your computer and will fix it for you, if you switch on your computer and let them take remote control of it.

Your safe course is to HANG UP. If you let them take over your computer remotely, they will pretend to cure a problem you didn't have and charge a fee for doing so. They might also have stolen confidential information from your computer that might let them access your bank account and steal your money.

Microsoft cannot be aware of any fault on your computer. Even if you have sent them a report of a fault as requested when something goes wrong, the report is anonymous so they cannot identify your computer. Microsoft will never ring you or ask to control your machine.

Hang up; dial 101 and report the incident to the police.

There are other scams that are familiar to many, but keep coming. Some people must still be biting to keep them worthwhile.

DO NOT believe an email that says you have won a major prize in a lottery that you have no recollection of entering. DO NOT ring the number to verify your prize. It is probably a premium rate line and there is no prize. The same applies to a free holiday abroad. It's a scam.

DO NOT believe that anyone wants your help to import a large sum of money in return for a big slice of it. DO NOT pay an up-front administration fee.

If you get a desperate email from a friend suddenly called abroad and asking for financial help, DO call him (at home where he will be) and tell him his address book has been hacked.

No bank will ever email you asking you to confirm your account details.

If you wish to visit a website, DO NOT click on a link in an email from a stranger, but enter the website address yourself to ensure you are not diverted to a false website.