



## MEDIA FACTS

# Facts About Social Media Scams

## Social Media: A Scammers Playground

Before a scam ever reaches your wallet, it often starts with a post, a message, or a friend request. Social media platforms make it easy for scammers to blend in — posing as trusted brands, influencers, or even people you know.

**The goal: earn your trust before you even realize what's happening.** By the time money is involved, the groundwork has already been laid, and the scam feels just like another online interaction.

**Social media platforms have become prime hunting ground for scammers. The results have been staggering.**



### 1 in 4 people

reported losing money to scams said that the scheme started on social media since 2021



### Over \$2.7 billion

have been stolen through social media scams between 2021–2023



### 44 percent

of social media scams were people trying to buy something through an ad or online marketplace post



## How the Scam Hook Works

Social media scams come in many forms, but the tactics are strikingly similar. Scammers operating on social media are utilizing tactics that are designed to trick, manipulate, and defraud users in increasingly convincing ways.

## Below are some common scam tactics:



### Marketplace Scams

Online marketplaces have become a gold mine for scammers. In a September 2025 survey of 1,000 US adults that have used Facebook, 63% report shopping on Marketplace. Of those, more than 1 in 8 (14%) report being scammed, while nearly 8 in 10 (79%) report seeing scams on the platform. If a deal seems too good to be true, it is likely the case.



### Romance Scams

Scammers use social media or online dating sites to find victims. They build an emotional connection over time. They claim to live far away, so they can't meet in person. Then they start asking for money for medical expenses or even a plane ticket to come meet their victims. Once the money is sent, the fake accounts are deleted. After investment scams, romance scams have the second highest losses on social media.



### Imposter Scams

Scammers create fake social media accounts that impersonate celebrities, businesses, or even government officials to make connections with individuals. Victims are urged to send money to help the celebrity out or share their financial information with the government representative. Then, the accounts are taken down.



### Fake job opportunities

Social media and online job marketplaces have become filled with scammers offering fake opportunities to job hunters. Victims are asked to pay for so-called certifications and starter kits as part of the job onboarding. The scammers steal victims' credit card and banking information and then shutter their own social media accounts.

## Time to Hold Social Media Platforms Accountable

Social media companies have built systems that reward engagement but overlook safety. Their tools for detecting and removing scams are reactive, slow, and often ineffective. Users are left to fend for themselves in environments designed to be addictive, not secure.

It's time they take real responsibility by investing in stronger protections to block fake ads or take down criminal profiles, enforce meaningful standards, and put user safety ahead of growth at any cost.

