

2004 Trends

- The average loss to fraud victims totaled \$895, up from \$527 in 2003.
- Email as a growing method of contact by Internet crooks is at 22 percent, up from 5 percent in 2003.
- Of frauds initiated by email, the top scams include Nigerian Money Offers, Phishing, Lotteries/Lottery Clubs, and Fake Check Scams.
- Victims 60 and over comprise 8 percent of total victims, up from 5 percent in 2003.
- The top frauds victimizing people 60 and over include Lotteries/Lottery Clubs, Phishing, Information/Adult Services, and Nigerian Money Offers.

*In the fall of 2003, the online auction giant eBay removed the link from its Web site to the National Consumers League's fraud center. As a result, the number of auction complaints reported to NCL has dropped to 1/6 of the previous level. Based on statistics prior to eBay's action, NCL estimates that the fraud center would have received 32,916 auction complaints in 2004, representing 86 percent.

Internet
National Fraud Information Center
Watch



Internet Scams Fraud Trends 2004

Top Ten Scams

Category	% of All Complaints	Average Loss
Auctions <i>Goods never delivered or misrepresented</i>	51%*	\$765
General Merchandise <i>Sales not through auctions, goods never delivered or misrepresented</i>	20%	\$846
Nigerian Money Offers <i>False promises of riches if consumers pay to transfer money to their bank accounts</i>	8%	\$2,649
Phishing <i>Emails pretending to be from well-known source asking to confirm personal information</i>	5%	\$182
Information/Adult Services <i>Cost and terms of services not disclosed or misrepresented</i>	3%	\$241
Fake Checks <i>Consumers paid with phony checks for work or items sold, instructed to wire money back</i>	3%	\$5,201
Lotteries/Lottery Clubs <i>Requests for payment to claim lottery winnings or get help to win, often foreign lotteries</i>	3%	\$2,225
Computer Equipment/Software <i>Non-auction sales of equipment or software never delivered or misrepresented</i>	1%	\$1,401
Fake Escrow Services <i>Crooks direct buyers or sellers to phony escrow services, pocket money or get goods free</i>	1%	\$2,585
Internet Access Services <i>Cost of Internet access and other services misrepresented or services never provided</i>	1%	\$1,187

Internet Scams



Fraud Trends 2004

Ages of Consumers

<i>Ages</i>	<i>% of Complaints</i>
19 and Under	3%
20-29	24%
30-39	25%
40-49	24%
50-59	16%
60-69	6%
70+	2%

Top Five Methods of Payment

<i>Category</i>	<i>% of Payments</i>
Credit Card	29%
Money Order	21%
Bank Debit	12%
Debit Card	9%
Check	9%

Methods of Contact by Internet Crooks

<i>Category</i>	<i>% of Contacts</i>
Web sites	77%
Email	22%
Newsgroup	1%

Location

Top Consumer Locations Per Capita

Alaska
Hawaii
Tie: Utah, Washington, Wyoming,
New Hampshire, Kansas, Montana,
and Nevada

Top Five Crook Locations

<i>Location</i>	<i>% of Complaints</i>
Countries Outside U.S./Canada	26%
California	11%
New York	8%
Florida	8%
Texas	5%