

Internet fraud losses doubled last year

March 12 2010, By DEVLIN BARRETT , Associated Press Writer

(AP) -- The cost of Internet fraud doubled in 2009 to about \$560 million, the FBI said Friday. The most common type of frauds reported were scams from people falsely claiming to be from the FBI.

Individual complaints of Internet scams grew more than 20 percent last year, according to a report issued by the FBI in partnership with a private fraud-fighting group, the [Internet Crime Complaint Center](#).

The amounts taken by individual frauds ranged from less than \$30 to more than \$100,000, officials said.

The most frequently reported scams were those that falsely used the FBI's name, accounting for 16 percent of the more than 300,000 complaints received last year. Some of those frauds have even featured e-mails purporting to be from FBI Director Robert Mueller, though the e-mail addresses of the senders often betray the con, authorities said.

Peter Trahon, head of the FBI's cyber division, said people should evaluate the e-mail pitches they receive "with a healthy skepticism - if something seems too good to be true, it likely is."

For example, one popular [scam](#) last year involved a phone pitch made by someone who sounded a lot like President [Barack Obama](#).

The recorded message told people to visit a Web site to get government stimulus money. When victims who visited the site entered personal information and paid \$28 in fees, they were promised a big stimulus

check, but got nothing.

More information: Internet Crime Report:

<http://www.ic3.gov/media/annualreport/2009-IC3Report.pdf>

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Citation: Internet fraud losses doubled last year (2010, March 12) retrieved 25 April 2024 from <https://phys.org/news/2010-03-internet-fraud-losses-year.html>

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