

Online dating scams seducing Americans: agency

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A man surfs an online dating site. The US government consumer protection agency warned Americans on Tuesday to be on the lookout for online dating scams.

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"Scammers sometimes use online [dating](#) and [social networking sites](#) to try to convince people to send money in the name of love," the [Federal Trade Commission](#) said.

"In a typical scenario, the [scam](#) artist creates a fake profile, gains the trust of an online love interest, and then asks that person to wire money -- usually to a location outside the United States," the FTC said.

Wiring money is the same as sending cash, it said, and "once it's gone, it can't be recovered."

The FTC listed a number of "warning signs" people should be aware of when cruising the online dating scene including love interests who seek to "leave the dating site immediately and use personal e-mail or IM accounts."

Online daters should also be aware of potential partners who are "planning to visit, but (are) unable to do so because of a tragic event" or are "claiming instant feelings of love."

"Asking for money to pay for travel, visas or other travel documents, medication, a child or other relative's hospital bills" are other warning signs, the FTC said.

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