



Are You in Love with a Bot?

A.I. is making romance scams harder to spot. This new technology helps criminals sound more sincere when they flirt and have heart-to-heart conversations. A.I. even lets scammers completely change their looks and voices on live chats.

All of that makes it harder for us to tell when we're engaging with a scammer online. Many of us get in so deep that we don't feel alarmed when the criminal finally asks us for money.

If you engage with strangers online, here's what you should know about romance scams:

- Romance scams often start on social media or through "wrong person" texts.
- Although the relationships are designed to feel intimate and real, the "person" on the other side is made up by criminals.
- Scammers draw people in gradually: They can spend weeks or months building a sense of intimacy before they ask for money. The closer we feel to them, the harder it can be to say no to a financial request.
- Scammers pose as both ordinary people and as celebrities.

Protect yourself:

- Don't respond to "wrong number" texts or messages from strangers.
- Ignore social media posts offering special access to celebrities.
- If you can't meet someone in person, you can't be sure who you're communicating with.
- Immediately end online relationships with people who ask you to send money, make an investment or make a joint purchase (like a home).
- Never share intimate photos or videos with someone you've only met virtually.

Need help or want to learn more? Call Scam Squad at 216-443-7226 or online at cuyahogacounty.gov/scamsquad.