

Are You Vulnerable to Cyber Crime?

Cyber crime may be called online fraud, scams, phishing, hacking, identity theft, job fraud or investment fraud. It can start on social media, on a website, from an email, by telephone or the U.S. mail. And there are dozens of variants.

Cyber crime is intended to steal your money or your personal information. It is becoming so sophisticated that it can be hard for any of us to detect. Advances in artificial intelligence (AI) are increasing the danger.

Here is some alarming background from a variety of sources:

- In 2021, half of American internet users had their personal accounts breached.
- Nearly one in three Americans have reported being a victim of online financial fraud or cybercrime. Some of them are friends in our Meeting!
- In 2022, the FBI's Internet Crime Complaint Center received a total of 800,944 reported complaints, with losses exceeding \$10.3 billion.
- Reported losses to scams on social media alone hit a staggering \$2.7 billion in 2023. And because the vast majority of frauds are not reported, this figure reflects just a small fraction of the public harm.
- We often think that scams mostly affect older adults. But reports to the Federal Trade Commission tell a different story: anyone can be scammed. In fact, no age group has fallen for online scams more than people under the age of 21. Scams affect every age group, but differently.
- In 2021, people ages 18-59 were more likely than older adults to report losing money to fraud. Younger adults reported losses to online shopping fraud — which often started with an ad on social media — *far* more often than any other fraud type, and most said they simply did not get the items they ordered. Younger adults were more likely than older adults to report a loss on an investment scam and to lose money on job scams.
- While older adults were less likely to report losing money to fraud, those 70 and over reported much higher individual losses. And older adults are more likely to report losing money on tech support scams than younger adults. Older adults were also more likely to report losing money on a non-delivery, prize, sweepstakes, and lottery scams.
- Fewer than half of older adults reported confidence in their ability to recognize scams.

The lesson is clear: no matter your age, learning about cyber crime is important for *everyone*.

The Communications Committee wants to improve our ability to secure our digital devices, detect cyber crime attacks and avoid becoming victims.

Occasional cyber crime tip sheets will be published on our Quaker Talk listserv, mentioned in our weekly announcements and minuted during meeting for business. They will be archived on our website at this link:

www.milwaukeequakers.org/cybersecurity/

Yes, we are *all* vulnerable to cyber crime. Let's protect ourselves. Click the link to learn more.