

How to detect it

- This scam always begins with an unsolicited e-mail, which is the first indication something is amiss. Think about it. If you had that much money to transfer, would you trust it to a stranger online?
- Many of these e-mails contain poor punctuation and grammar.
- Scammers often demand an immediate response, usually within 10 business days.
- These scams also claim they are trying to export the money from Nigeria, but recent variations of this scam have used other African and Middle Eastern countries.

An example of a Nigerian Scam e-mail

From: Scammi Wazoo advancefeefraud@419.net

To: You@consumer.com

Subject: PLEASE HELP ME

Dear friend:

My name is Scammi Wazoo, son of the CEO of the Dupeyu Bank of Nigeria. Due to Political strife, I am unable to move my family's savings of \$20,000,000 (TWENTY MILLION DOLLARS) without it being traced by rebel roces. I am soliciting your help in transferring this money out of the country. If you would provide your business name or letterhead and name, address for verification, I will transfer these funds to your account for safekeeping. For your help in this, my family will let you keep \$2,000,000 (TWO MILLION DOLLARS) of the money. I await your response.

Sincerely,

Scammi Wazoo

What can you do to protect yourself?

- NEVER extend credit to a stranger for any reason.
- NEVER give personal or business information, especially credit card or bank account numbers, to strangers, even if they sound official.
- NEVER do business with a foreign country without going through the proper channels.
- REPORT the sender to the sender's e-mail provider, if possible.
- BEWARE of people offering "free money."
- REMEMBER: If it sounds too good to be true, it probably is.

What to do if you've been victimized:

If you have been victimized by this scam, please contact the United State Secret Service at 202.406.5850 or fill out the online form at www.secretservice.gov/contact_fcd.shtml.

If you have received a letter but have not lost any money to this scheme, please fax a copy of that letter to 202.406.5031.

You may also contact the Department of Consumer Affairs, 803.777.4200, for more information.

Just the facts on...

Nigerian E-mail Scam

Don't believe everything you read in your inbox, unsolicited e-mails are often scams.



A brief history

If this scam sounds familiar, it should. The “Nigerian E-mail” Scam, sometimes referred to as the “419” Scam, is one of the oldest financial scams on record. The e-mail version of the Nigerian Scam is only the latest medium through which this scam has been attempted.

Previously, this scam operated through letters and faxes, but with the advent of e-mail, scammers are able to contact masses of people for little cost. All they need is one person to take the bait; don't let that person be you.

How does it work?



Scammers want you to believe you are holding money for them, when in fact, they're trying to get their hands on your money.

This scam starts with an unsolicited e-mail, supposedly from a foreign company, dignitary, or diplomat, claiming to need assistance in transferring a large sum of money to the United States. The e-mail claims your help is needed or government officials will seize the money.

In exchange for your help, a generous percentage of the funds, usually millions of dollars, will be transferred to your bank account.

It's not quite that simple, though. Soon requests for money to “bribe officials” to help squire the money out

of the country or to pay for “writing costs and transferring funds” will begin to pour in.

These requests will continue until you either stop paying or your bank account has been emptied. By then, however, your money and the con artists have disappeared, leaving you with nothing but empty promises and an empty wallet.

Since the overwhelming majority of these e-mails originate over seas, the chances of tracking down the criminals are remote. Recovery or reimbursement of money lost is very unlikely.



South Carolina Department of Consumer Affairs

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e-mail: scdca@dca.state.sc.us or visit www.sconsumer.gov

Phone: 803.734.4200 or 1.800.922.1594

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