



The Art *of the* Scam

A scam has a certain art to it, a social science that is deeply rooted in people that they don't even realize is there. I'll take you through some of the science used by scammers.

1. Fear/Confusion

This is the most common exploit. Once they have you scared or confused the chances increase significantly that you will make a mistake. It's one instinct that they know they can use every single time. Confusion with technology is beyond common, and not just the older population; I have seen people of all ages and walks of life get scammed.

2. The “helpful” voice on the line

This is the next step, making you believe that they truly want to help you. They'll do everything for you if you just trust them. Trust should be earned, not given freely. Would you let a random person on the street dig through your purse or wallet? Of course not! Treat your computer with the same level of security.

3. The “if you don't help me, I'll get into trouble” scam

This is truly classic and preys on something most people don't realize is so deeply rooted in our subconscious that

it's actually very easy to exploit. We want to help people. Our parents teach us this since we're born. This is especially true of people in positions of authority, we want to help them. Again, it goes back to trust, a title does not make someone trustworthy. Many will even throw out that it's their first day or week working and they don't want to get fired.

These are just a few of the tricks used in a scam, if you wrap them up into a single call with the right person they are the ultimate combination of deception. Most scammers will ask you for gift cards. I've had to deal with the CRA and I can promise you they do not take Google gift cards. Microsoft or a subcontractor will never, ever call you out of the blue. Check out canada.ca/be-scam-smart for more tips. If you do get scammed, talk to the police as soon as possible. Talk to your friends and family, I know it's embarrassing, but scammers thrive on silence. If it can happen to you, it can happen to anyone. Share your story with anyone who will listen. Finally get a tech professional into your home to make sure no backdoors have been put into your systems. Trust is fine, but always balance it with skepticism. It never hurts, and if it sounds too good to be true then it probably is.

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