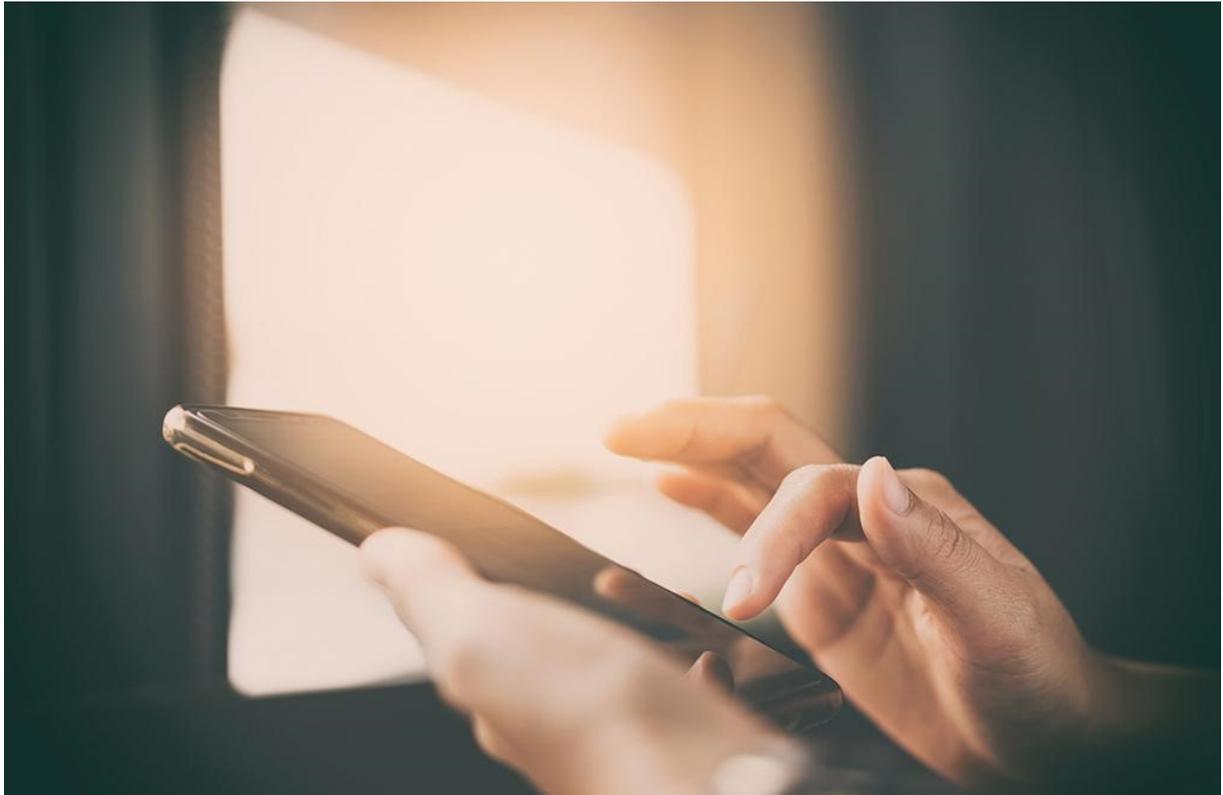


## Experienced fraudsters are taking advantage of a surge in dating app users.

LYON, France – INTERPOL has issued a Purple Notice to its 194 member countries outlining a specific modus operandi on dating applications.

The threat involves taking advantage of people’s vulnerabilities as they look for potential matches, and luring them into a sophisticated fraud scheme.



In the initial stages, an artificial romance is established via a dating app. Once communication becomes regular and a certain level of trust is established, criminals share investment tips with their victims and encourage them to join a scheme.

Victims download a trading app and open an account, buy various financial products and work their way up a so-called investment chain, all under the watchful eye of their new “friend”. They are made to believe they can reach Gold or VIP status.

As is often the case with such fraud schemes, everything is made to look legitimate. Screenshots are provided, domain names are eerily similar to real websites, and customer service agents pretend to help victims choose the right products.

One day, however, all contact stops and victims are locked out of the account. They're left confused, hurt, and worried that they'll never see their money again.

INTERPOL's Financial Crimes unit has received reports from around the world of this scam and is encouraging dating app users to be vigilant, be skeptical and be safe when entering into online relationships. This has become especially important as people turn to online interactions during the COVID-19 pandemic.

Here are some tips to make sure online dating remains fun and doesn't empty your bank account:

- Always be vigilant when you are approached by someone you don't know, especially if it leads to a request for money;
- Be skeptical: online investments with promises of fast, amazing returns are often too good to be true;
- Think twice before transferring money, however genuine the request might seem;
- Do your research: check reviews, double check the app, the domain name, the email address, etc;
- Don't disclose personal/confidential information;
- If you realize you've been the victim of a fraud, report it.

READ: [Online scams: It might not be too late to get your money back](#)