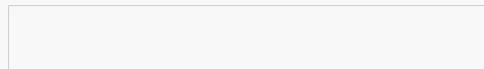


# Cybersecurity Awareness Month At Seneca! - Romance Scams

Published 5/11/2023 by [Nick Farro](#)



## Romance Scams - Who is really behind the screen?

Keep your guard up and look out for potential scammers who will try to lower your defences by appealing to your romantic and compassionate side. They can prey on you on popular, legitimate dating sites as well as on fake ones.

On a real dating site, a scammer might send you a few messages and a good-looking photo of themselves, or of someone they claim to be. Once you are charmed, they will start asking you to send money. They may claim to have a very sick family member or a desperate situation with which they need your help. Once you give them money, they often disappear.

Romance scammers create fake profiles on dating sites and apps, or contact their targets through popular social media sites like Instagram, Facebook, or Google Hangouts. The scammers strike up a relationship with their targets to build their trust, sometimes talking or chatting several times a day. Then, they make up a story and ask for money.



## The Lies Scammers tell

They'll often say they're living or traveling outside of the United States. We've heard about scammers who say they are:

- working on an oil rig
- in the military
- a doctor with an international organization

We've heard about romance scammers asking their targets for money to:

- pay for a plane ticket or other travel expenses
- pay for surgery or other medical expenses
- pay customs fees to retrieve something
- pay off gambling debts
- pay for a visa or other official travel documents

Scammers ask people to pay

- by **wiring money**
- with **reload cards** like MoneyPak or **gift cards** from vendors like Amazon, Google Play, iTunes, or Steam

*Scammers ask you to pay by wiring money, with reload cards, or with gift cards because they can get cash quickly and remain anonymous. They also know the transactions are almost impossible to reverse.*

A fraudster can also create a fake dating site where you pay for each message you send and receive. To keep you writing back and paying, the scammer may hook you in with vague emails about their love and desire for you.

In many cases, the scammer may even arrange to meet up with you in person to make their fraud seem more credible.

### **Tips to keep you safe:**

- Never send money or give financial details on a dating site.
- Trust your instincts, ask questions and carefully read the terms and conditions before signing up.
- Know which services are free, which ones cost money and what it takes to cancel your account.
- Make sure you only use legitimate and reputable dating sites. Always check website addresses carefully, as scammers often mimic real web addresses.
- Remember that it's very unlikely that someone will declare their undying love to

anyone after only a few letters, emails, phone calls or pictures.

**"I think I'm a victim of identity theft or a scam, what should I do?!"**

If you ever feel like you have been the victim of fraud, a scam or identity theft consider the following:

- stop all communication with the fraudster or scammer
- notify financial institutions and other companies where you have an account that may have been affected
- avoid making any major financial decisions until you feel you've taken action to secure your accounts
- change passwords to accounts that may have been affected, including social media sites
- gather all records you have of the fraud or scam

**These tips and more can be found in the attached document!**

If you wish to report the fraud to Seneca Security, please reach out to [security@senecacollege.ca](mailto:security@senecacollege.ca), call us at 416-764-0911 or send us a message through the Seneca SAFE app with the following information:

- Your name
- The date of the fraud
- Your affiliation to Seneca
- Details of the incident
- Any actions you have done on your end(ie. Police report)

Please spread the word with the hashtag #senecafraudfighter and #senecascamawareness to let everyone know you are a fighter of fraud!

Stay tuned for more great information.

**Seneca Security - Your Safety Matters!**

tags : crimeprevention, cybersecurity, fraud, security, senecafraudfighter, senecascamawareness