

Catfishing

Scammers hide behind fake online profiles and images because it's easier

► Target Profile

Scammers are ruthless, often targeting widows and widowers on dating sites. Anyone looking to connect is vulnerable.

► Tactics

Catfishers will lavish their targets with praise and compliments to create a strong and lasting bond.

► Escalation

Once a bond is created, requests for personal and professional details increase in an effort to better leverage the 'relationship'.

► Money and Sex

Requests for money and intimate photos are some of the most common because they give the scammer power over the target.

► Leverage

With the target's account numbers or photos, the scammer can threaten or blackmail for more money or sexual favors. The latter is called 'sextortion.'

A 'yes' answer to any of these questions means you're likely being catfished.

Does this person seem too good to be true?

Is this person far more attractive and successful than the usual prospects?

Do online or social media searches for this person yield little or conflicting results?

Is the relationship moving way too fast?

Are attempts to meet or video chat with this person continually being put off?

We all long to connect, especially when someone or something is missing in our lives. Which makes anyone vulnerable.

Feeling the thrill of a new relationship is powerful, even if it's fake. Which is why most targets are willing to fully invest.

When we invest in a relationship, we're more willing to part with money, information, intimate photos or anything that's being asked.

Feelings of love and elation are common among targets in the throes of a budding 'relationship.'

Because targets often engage with scammers on an emotional level, they're less likely to think with their heads.

If you suspect you're being catfished, walk away from the relationship immediately.

Hint: Saving and uploading a profile image to Google image search can reveal its real source.



Fake online profiles are called 'sock puppets'

Fact: One notorious catfishing ring employed ten members to keep up with the demands of messaging and engaging targets!