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AARP Calls for Online Dating Sites to Crack Down on Fraud after Americans Lose \$82 Million to Scammers in Just Six Months

Launches Petition Supporting New Safeguards

WASHINGTON, DC—With romance scammers using the Internet to rob Americans of an estimated \$82 million in the last half of 2014, AARP's [Fraud Watch Network](#) today called on the online dating industry to institute new safeguards to better protect their users. AARP is also inviting its members and the general public to become involved in the campaign by signing an [online petition](#).

Demonstrating the ease with which online dating con artists currently operate, the June/July edition of *AARP The Magazine* contains the compelling [story](#) of one victim who was robbed of hundreds of thousands of dollars in a romance fraud.

"Individual scammers and highly organized groups attempt to steal hearts and wallets from online dating site users every day," said Doug Shadel, a Fraud Watch Network expert who also serves as AARP Washington state director. "The sites don't yet do enough to protect their members from known scammers. Our petition asks the companies to take commonsense steps to help put a stop to the scammers' abilities to prey on the unsuspecting."

The FBI's [Internet Crime Complaint Center](#) reports that romance scams cost Americans more than \$82 million in losses during the last six months of 2014. To combat such losses, specific [anti-fraud measures](#) the Fraud Watch Network urges the online dating sites to implement include:

- Employ algorithms to detect suspicious language patterns used by scammers.
- Search for fake profiles across multiple dating websites.
- Issue alerts to any member who has been in contact with someone using a fraudulent profile.
- Educate members with tips on how to avoid romance scammers.

As part of its current campaign, the AARP Fraud Watch Network has posted tips to advise dating site members how to avoid online scams. One handy tip is: Before you engage with anyone on a dating site, use Google's "search by image" feature to see if that person's image shows up in other places using a different name. If an email from a potential suitor seems suspicious, cut and paste it into Google and see if the words pop up on any romance scam sites. Consumers can learn more for themselves, their friends and family members at the [Fraud Watch Network](#).

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About AARP

AARP is a nonprofit, nonpartisan organization, with a membership of nearly 38 million, that helps people turn their goals and dreams into real possibilities, strengthens communities and fights for the issues that matter most to families such as healthcare, employment and income security, retirement planning, affordable utilities

and protection from financial abuse. We advocate for individuals in the marketplace by selecting products and services of high quality and value to carry the AARP name as well as help our members obtain discounts on a wide range of products, travel, and services. A trusted source for lifestyle tips, news and educational information, AARP produces AARP The Magazine, the world's largest circulation magazine; AARP Bulletin; www.aarp.org; AARP TV & Radio; AARP Books; and AARP en Español, a Spanish-language website addressing the interests and needs of Hispanics. AARP does not endorse candidates for public office or make contributions to political campaigns or candidates. The AARP Foundation is an affiliated charity that provides security, protection, and empowerment to older persons in need with support from thousands of volunteers, donors, and sponsors. AARP has staffed offices in all 50 states, the District of Columbia, Puerto Rico, and the U.S. Virgin Islands. Learn more at www.aarp.org.

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