



# Cryptocurrency Investment Scams

**The U.S. Secret Service has observed a significant increase in cryptocurrency and digital asset investment scams in the past 12 months. These scams often target victims who are users of social media, online dating, or professional networking platforms. These scams will continue to evolve, particularly with the increased popularity of Non-Fungible Tokens (NFTs).**

The execution of these scams varies, but typically involves a potential victim receiving a message from another registered user of these platforms. The message directs the potential victim to visit a website or to download a phone app supposedly associated with a cryptocurrency or digital asset investment opportunity. In some situations, the victim may also be enticed to make payments directly to the scammer in order for the latter to “manage” the investment in question. In reality, these alleged investment projects are scams designed to steal funds from the victim.

## PIG BUTCHERING

One particular variation of these scams is known as “Pig Butchering” and occurs primarily on online dating platforms. Usually, a victim will meet a perceived romantic partner and be duped into making fictitious investments into cryptocurrency or digital asset projects. The victim payments can be made via traditional bank or wire transfer, but also frequently involve the victim being directed to visit Bitcoin ATMs.

The victims in this situation are referred to as “pigs” by the scam artists, because the scammers will use elaborate romantic storylines to “fatten up” victims into believing they are in a romantic relationship. The scammers will then refer to “butchering” or “slaughtering” the victims once the victim assets are stolen by the criminals, ultimately causing the victims financial and emotional ruin.

## WARNING SIGNS:

- ❖ Receiving a solicitation on online dating, social media, or professional networking websites to invest in cryptocurrency or digital asset projects by either transferring funds directly to the individual or creating an account on a website or phone app allegedly operated by the project in question.
- ❖ Receiving a request from an online dating partner to transfer funds, via a Bitcoin ATM, bank, or money remitting service, as an investment opportunity or to assist with a financial hardship.
- ❖ Receiving a communication promoting an online investment opportunity through a website which includes poor spelling or grammatical structure, dubious customer testimonials, or general amateurish web layouts.
- ❖ Receiving a communication promoting an online investment opportunity advising to create an account associated with cryptocurrency or digital asset projects and requesting to share the account login credentials to assist with investment management.
- ❖ Receiving a message requesting to remotely connect to a computer and assist with creating an online account associated with cryptocurrency or digital asset projects.
- ❖ Receiving a request to download software, plugins, or browser add-ons to use the processing power of a computer or smartphone for cryptocurrency mining or digital asset investment purposes.

