



Report # 1 – Mass Marketing Fraud Activities – January 2015

Canadian Anti-Fraud Centre – Ontario Monthly Statistical Report

Statistics presented in this report are based on what has been captured by the CAFC at a given point in time and are subject to change resulting from inputting back log complaints and database cleaning.

MMF Complainants

The following table presents a breakdown of Ontario and Canadian MMF consumer complaints.

MMF Complaints January – 2015							
Ontario Complaints				Canadian Complaints			
Attempts	Victims	Total	Dollar Loss	Attempts	Victims	Total	Dollar Loss
1,167	451	1,618	\$2,680,228.63	2,469	1,059	3,528	\$4,192,567.56

MMF Suspects

MMF operation locations are based on suspect addresses reported by consumers. Thus, it must be noted that in some cases, reported addresses may be mail drops and not the physical location of a MMF operation, or the suspect location identified may be false.

The following table presents a breakdown on Ontario and Canadian based MMF operations.

MMF Operations January – 2015							
Ontario Based Suspects				Canadian Based Suspects			
Attempts	Victims	Total	Dollar Loss	Attempts	Victims	Total	Dollar Loss
141	52	193	\$183,135.42	331	157	488	\$540,878.17

The following table identifies the top three MMF pitch types reported by Ontario and Canadian consumers based on the total number of complaints.

Top 3 MMF Pitch Types January – 2015	
Ontario Based MMF	Canadian Based MMF
Prize	Sale of Merchandise by Complainant
Service	Prize
Job	Directory

Romance Scams

Romance scams continue to have a profound impact on consumers and cause severe financial harm. In 2014 alone Canadians lost \$13,736,678.93 to this scam.

Fraudsters steal photos and use dating sites and social media to lure potential victims into sending money for various reasons. The fraudsters have shown that they are willing to develop the relationship over an extended period of time; this increases the trust level between the victim and the fraudster which results in the potential victim usually losing more money.

The fraudster will gain the trust of the victim through displays of affection and in some cases will send gifts, flowers and tokens to prove that their feelings are genuine. While the fraudster is usually located in a faraway country, eventually they will state that they want to meet the potential victim in person. It is at this time the fraudster will advise they can't afford to travel and will seek assistance from the victim in covering travel costs. Other variations include the fraudster presenting situations of emergency or urgency, such as a sick family member and seeking financial assistance from the victim for various costs.

Warning Signs – How to Protect Yourself

- Fraudsters want to develop a quick relationship with you, be suspicious when someone you haven't met professes their love to you.
- Never under any circumstances send money for any reason.
- Be cautious when conversing with an individual that claims to live close to you but is working overseas, this is a set up for the fraudster to provide numerous reasons to ask for money.
- If you receive a "pay cheque" or another form of payment from someone you've met online and they ask you to cash it and send a portion of the funds back to them - don't do it! It's a counterfeit cheque and you'll be responsible to cover any fees from the bank.

If your police service is receiving reports in relation to this MMF scam or any others please contact the Canadian Anti-Fraud Centre by phone 1-888-495-8501 or by e-mail (law enforcement only) le@antifraudcentre.ca.