

Verifying Classified Ads and Detecting Scams and Frauds.

Scammers are generally found everywhere and this also holds true for the classified ads world. In fact as people and companies are getting more equipped to fight scams, the scammers are trying to stay one step ahead of them and are continuously evolving and improving their scamming methods.

It is of utmost importance that, when you are dealing with a classified ad owner, you take extreme caution and follow these useful steps to verify the legitimacy of the offer.

1. Check if there are any reviews or feedback available online for the seller. You can search for their user-name or real name on Google to see if people have purchased from them before or not.
2. Search for the same ad on the net and see if the ad has been advertised on many sites. If it has been, see if you can find any reviews or information relating to that ad being dubious or a possible scam. Scam artists will always post their ads on many sites to lure as many buyers as possible into their scam.
3. See if contact number is available and preferably call them to verify their details. Speak to the ad owner and discuss shipping and payment methods.
4. Always try to pay via credit card, cash on delivery, cheque or any other traceable payment method, so that you can initiate a chargeback in case if you happen to be a victim of their fraud. Payment methods such as western union and money transfer cannot be traced and are a signal enough to doubt the authenticity of the offer.
5. Ask the seller for their address and mention that someone would visit their premises prior to the purchase to verify the quality of the goods. Use this technique even if you intend not to visit them or even if the seller resides in a different country. You can tell a lot by the way they will respond to your intention of visiting their premises. If they are not keen to see you or come up with various excuses or if they are dumb founded, then the general rule of thumb would be to totally avoid such a deal and most likely it will be a scam.
6. If you get an instinct that a particular deal is too good to be true, then don't be tempted by the offer. Thoroughly investigate the classified details and if after thorough due diligence, you are still not convinced then definitely avoid the transaction.

This list is by no means complete and we will continue to add more checks to ensure that you don't fall for the trap. These are just some of the checks you can very easily carry out on your own however it's always advisable to seek professional help before you commit yourself to the purchase.

Listed below are some common scams that you might across on the net, whereby you are advised to exercise extreme caution when dealing with these ad owners.

1. Pet Ads. These scammers are trying to sell their pets and are often not located in the country of your residence. They will ask for money upfront and will vanish with your funds.
2. Hiring Ads. These ad owners will offer very attractive pay packages to lure the customers into their scam. The ads in general are about hiring baby sitters, security guards, nurses, cooks or other related skilled labor. They will ask for visa and documents processing fee and vanish with your funds.
3. Vehicle and Cars. Similar to the scam explained above, they will ask for a specific fee and once paid, they will disappear into thin air.
4. Data Entry Ads. With these types of ads, they will get the work done from you and never make the payment in the end.

Lastly, the list below presents other useful material and checks that you must read before engaging yourself in purchasing though classified ads.

General Fraud and Scam Information:

- http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Internet_fraud
- <http://www.hotscams.com/>
- <http://www.craigslist.org/about/scams.html>
- http://pages.ebay.com/securitycenter/avoiding_fraud.html

Vehicle Scams and Fraud:

- <http://www.olderide.com/scams.html>
- <http://www.buyeguardian.com/onlinescams.php>

Real Estate Fraud and Scams

- <http://www.thefreelibrary.com/Fraud-a063986322>
- <http://ezinearticles.com/?Real-Estate-Scam&id=468916>

Government Agencies to notify

- FTC online complaint form (<http://www.ftc.gov>)
- Internet Fraud Complaint Center (<http://www.ic3.gov/>)