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**The Top 10 Scams for 2001**

**By Audri and Jim Lanford**

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Excerpt from Internet ScamBusters (tm) The #1 Publication on Internet Fraud

Scams on the Internet are growing — and with the vast selection, it was hard to only choose ten. We've tried to soften this list with a bit of humor. But please don't let the humor make these scams seem any less serious than they really are.

Some of these scams are very dangerous.

A word of warning, so to speak. These aren't ranked by dollars lost or people scammed. There's nothing scientific about the list. It's just the ten scams that we find the most disturbing.

You'll note that most of these involve spam. There's a reason for that. The mentality of a spammer is exactly the same kind of mindset as a con artist.

As we always say: "If it's spam, it's scam."

Here are the top 10 scams of 2001...

10. Herbal Viagra

This is really a whole category of scams, relating to the sale of medical or "alternative" medical treatments online. Usually using spam to get to the "customer."

If you're lucky, these products will do nothing at all. Some of them are seriously dangerous by themselves. They promise cures for life threatening illnesses, causing those who buy the promise to delay proper medical treatment, sometimes past the point where it would have helped.

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Talk to your doctor or pharmacist before buying into any of these nostrums. It'll save you a lot of headaches and heartache later.

Folks, consider this: If you wouldn't trust a spammer to handle your money, why would you take medical advice from them???

### 9. Internet Investigator

"Be the first kid on your block to know all the dirty secrets your neighbors are hiding! Find out what your prospective mate has hidden in his past! Find the lost city of Atlantis! Find your lost remote!"

This one is more an annoyance than a real problem. It serves as a great example of the pure hype that you should watch out for in online advertising.

Filled with promises of secret knowledge that's not available to anyone else, it delivers nothing more than a list of places you can pay to search for information. It's the perfect example of a pitch that's not quite a scam -- but clearly misleads in its promise.

Ask yourself this: If this stuff was as easy as the ads make it out to be, wouldn't you see these "secret techniques" in magazines and on TV?

### 8. Pump and Dump

You've probably gotten these. The subject line or first part of the email says that this is "Highly confidential information."

This scam is based on touting "advance information" on specific stocks in an attempt to drive up the price past its true worth, so the promoters can sell at the higher price.

They pump it up, and then dump it. Hence the name.

This is generally illegal. And certainly a bad way to get investment advice...

Ask yourself: If it's so confidential, why are they spamming it to millions of people?

### 7. Credit Scams

There are all sorts of these that prey on the desires of people to repair or establish credit.

The worst are the alleged credit repair services. They promise to help you to remove accurate but negative information from your credit record, or to show you how to get a federal Employer ID Number, usually in very questionable fashion.

Not only do these techniques not work, they can get you in deep trouble for committing fraud.

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You're not going to fix your credit while you're in jail.

As far as easy credit, guaranteed approval credit cards, and home equity loans that don't require equity in your home... forget it.

This one should be obvious: Cheap money? From a BANK???

### 6. Auction Antics

You can get a lot of terrific deals through online auctions, but you need to be careful. Before buying anything that seems too cheap, or that shouldn't be on an auction site at all, ask questions.

Look at the seller's feedback rating and comments. You'll get a lot of clues from that. Check the retail price of the merchandise. If it's new merchandise, you can probably expect to pay 1/2 to 2/3 of retail, even at auction.

Remember the old story of the fellow who raffled off a brand new Lincoln at a small town carnival? Tickets were \$1 each, and everyone figured they had a good chance.

He sold a lot of tickets, and, as promised, he delivered a brand new Lincoln... penny.

For more on auction fraud, you can check out the issue of Internet ScamBusters called "Online Auctions: Deals or Steals" at: <http://www.scambusters.org/Scambusters43.html>

### 5. Chain Letters

"Add your name to position X, move the name in position Y to position Z, send 200 copies of this letter to your closest personal friends, and very soon you'll have no personal friends left!"

Don't believe the claims about legitimacy, folks. These things are illegal, immoral, and probably fattening.

### 4. Viruses

Get a good anti-virus program, keep it updated, and keep it running.

Huh? What are viruses doing in the ranks of scams?

They're actually among the more clever of scams, if you think about it. Deceptive subject lines, hidden code that causes you to spread them to your friends, and almost always appealing to the most common desires.

### 3. Nigerian Fee Scam

This is an oldie, and a real baddie.

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The basic line goes like this:

"I represent some high mucky muck who wants to get a lot of suspicious money out of my country, and we need help from you to do it. We'll pay you stupid amounts of cash to be a front person."

The system escalates until you've got money sunk into the scam, and they want you to visit the country in question in person. There have been people who played along with this and never made it home alive.

Originally this was focused through Nigeria, but with recent events, you may hear about Taliban leaders wanting help, or people from other war-torn countries.

Don't respond to these people in any way. People die falling for this one.

For more on this scam, check out: <http://www.scambusters.org/NigerianFee.html>

### 2. Identity Theft

This is a VERY serious problem. We covered this in our last issue of Internet ScamBusters. If you haven't read it, do so now at: <http://www.scambusters.org/Scambusters47.html>

### 1. WTC Scams

The spams relating to the World Trade Center began within an hour of the attacks. They range from appeals for aid to the victims, usually sent through the spammers' web sites, to fake news items concerning reported attacks.

There's nothing funny to be said about these.

Don't pass them along, and don't contribute through any site that doesn't belong to a recognizable charity, such as the Red Cross or the United Way.

You can read more about these scams at: <http://www.scambusters.org/Scambusters46.html>

When you consider doing any sort of business online, look over this list and see if the appeal sounds like one or more of these scams. If so, check it out carefully before sending money.

Most online businesses are run by honest folks and are quite safe. Just use a little common sense and caution, and you should be fine.

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Avoid getting scammed on the Internet. Sign up for a free subscription to Internet ScamBusters, the #1 publication on Internet fraud. Send a blank email to

or visit:

## South Park (Season 5) DVD Review

By **Britt Gillette**

Politically incorrect in almost every way, South Park is a crudely drawn cartoon with an almost limitless number of hilarious and sarcastic moments. Stellar, sometimes off-the-wall writing makes up for poor animation in this series which follows the lives of four third-graders at South Park Elementary School: Stan, Kyle, Cartman, and Kenny. With an enormous supporting cast of eccentric characters, South Park rivals The Simpsons in its ability to create strange, yet believable personalities...

The South Park (Season 5) DVD features a number of hilarious episodes including the season premiere "It His the Fan" in which Kyle gets four tickets to see The Lion King on stage, but he can't find anyone (adult or child) willing to go because everyone in South Park is infatuated with the upcoming television broadcast of the show Cop Drama in which the word shit will be used on TV for the first time ever. When the big event occurs, it ends up changing South Park for the worse... Other notable episodes from Season 5 include "Cripple Fight" in which Big Gay Al becomes Kyle, Stan, Cartman, and Kenny's Boy Scout leader, and "Cartmanland" in which Cartman's grandmother dies and leaves him one million dollars which he then uses to purchase his own personal theme park...

Below is a list of episodes included on the South Park (Season 5) DVD:

Episode 66 (It Hits the Fan) Air Date: 06-20-2001 Episode 67 (Cripple Fight) Air Date: 06-27-2001  
Episode 68 (The Super Best Friends) Air Date: 07-04-2001 Episode 69 (Scott Tenorman Must Die) Air Date: 07-11-2001  
Episode 70 (Terrance and Phillip: Behind the Blow) Air Date: 07-18-2001 Episode 71 (Cartmanland) Air Date: 07-25-2001  
Episode 72 (Proper Condom Use) Air Date: 08-01-2001 Episode 73 (Towelie) Air Date: 08-08-2001  
Episode 74 (Osama Bin Laden Has Farty Pants) Air Date: 11-07-2001 Episode 75 (How to Eat With Your Butt) Air Date: 11-14-2001  
Episode 76 (The Entity) Air Date: 11-21-2001 Episode 77 (Here Comes the Neighborhood) Air Date: 11-28-2001  
Episode 78 (Kenny Dies) Air Date: 12-05-2001 Episode 79 (Butters' Very Own Episode) Air Date: 12-12-2001

Britt Gillette is author of The DVD Report (

), a blog where you can find

more reviews like this one.

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