

FACEBOOK, GOOGLE LACK EFFECTIVE SCAM REPORTING PROCESSES

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Another challenge is the complexity involved in the reporting tools online. | Photo Credit: [AFP](#)

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Google, Facebook, and other platforms are hosts to fraudulent advertisements, and rely on users reporting scams to stop them. But two in five users online don't report these ads stating they are put off by time-consuming forms and perceived lack of actions by the platforms, according to a survey conducted by U.K. consumer watchdog 'Which'.

'Which' surveyed over 2,000 people across the U.K. to understand their behaviour towards online advertisement scams. Nearly 43% scam victims were conned by an advertisement they saw online, via a search engine or social media ad, and didn't report the scam to the platform hosting it.

About 35% of 1,630 social media users said they didn't know how to report dodgy ads that appear in their search listing, indicating the lack of transparency, the survey stated.

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Nearly a third of respondents said they fell prey to scam advertisements they saw on Facebook, while one in five said a scam targeted them through Google advertisements. Facebook and Google may be particularly attractive to scammers as the algorithms tend to recommend similar content, prompting users to view similar ads if they clicked on one scam ad, the survey noted.

Scammers also resort to 'account hopping' by opening accounts to post scam ads for a limited period of time. Once the purpose is served, they remove their ads and close their accounts to avoid being removed, reported or banned. This makes it harder for victims to keep track and report.

Another challenge is the complexity involved in the reporting tools online. While Facebook offers a comprehensive reporting tool on its platform, nearly 60% respondents said they did not report the fraud ad because they didn't believe the social network would take actions against it.

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Google, on the other hand, takes the user through five steps to submit a report, making it cumbersome to follow, the survey noted.

Micro-blogging platform Twitter has a straightforward reporting process but lacks an option to specifically report a scam advert, the survey found.

Online scams can cause both financial and emotional damage to users, and can also help online platforms profit from criminal activity, 'Which' added.

Please enter a valid email address.

Since the backlash from its users began in January, WhatsApp has been trying hard to get them back on its platform, by using several methods including reaching out to users via the “status” feature

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