



4 dangerous WhatsApp scams you need to know about

As WhatsApp adds its billionth user, take a look at some of the common scams and tricks virtual conmen try using the messaging service. You just need to con a tiny fraction of these users to make serious money. Fraudsters using WhatsApp often try to persuade you to hand over details that can be used in identity theft, such as your name and address. Other scams will try to install malware - malicious software - on your phone. This effectively spies on you and collects information that can be used for sinister purposes. A third type of tricksters just starts charging you for services that should be free.

So what should we be looking out for?

1. The voicemail

You've been left a voicemail. But what is it? You just need to press the helpfully large 'Listen' button to hear the message.

But rather than revealing a mystery caller, the button leads you to a dodgy website that tries to install malware on your phone.

The website Hoax Slayer says: "Be wary of any email that claims that you have a voice message from WhatsApp and should click a button to hear it.

"Genuine WhatsApp voice messages will be delivered via the app itself, not via a separate email."

2. The vouchers

Aldi, Sainsbury's and M&S have recently warned shoppers over the scam. Watch out for fake vouchers!

You get pinged a link on WhatsApp. It promises you a discount at a supermarket or retailer. In return, you have to fill in a short survey. The link takes you to a counterfeit website, and when you plug your details in it goes straight to the scammers.

3. The 'premium' version

You see an ad for WhatsApp Gold, an exclusive service with special emoticons JUST FOR YOU. In an instant, you download it. In fact, you've downloaded a fee-paying messaging service. From enjoying free messages, you'll go to paying for every single text you happily

type out.

4. The Spy App

You stumble across a WhatsApp Spy app that allows you to see what your friends and colleagues are saying to each other on the messaging service. You download the link provided at once. There is no way of listening in to other people's conversations on WhatsApp . Instead, you've just signed up to a fee-paying messaging service.

Whats App advice about scams:

The team behind WhatsApp doesn't appreciate fraudsters jumping on the instant messaging bandwagon.

The WhatsApp blog confirms it does not send messages to us and it warns us to be particularly cautious of messages where:

- The sender claims to be affiliated with WhatsApp
- The message content includes instructions to forward the message
- The message claims you can avoid punishment, like account suspension, if you forward the message
- The message content includes a reward or gift

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