

# Detecting and Preventing Mass-Marketing Fraud (DAPM)

## Newsletter 2- Autumn 2017

Welcome to the second DAPM newsletter. This quarterly newsletter will bring you up to date on the latest developments in the DAPM project and other related news and events. If you would like to contribute please get in touch via the contact on the last page. We hope you enjoy reading this and being part of the DAPM community

### Progress

#### Research Institute of Cyber Security (RISCS) Community

The DAPM project is a new member of the Research Institute in Science of Cyber Security (RISCS2) community. Professor Monica Whitty attended the most recent RISCS community meeting in June to present the project. Focusing on online dating, Professor Whitty discussed the characteristics of victims, the persuasive techniques used by the scammers and guardianship. Professor Whitty also discussed possible methods to improve guardianship by using online tools and providing more effective information to users.

#### Victimhood in romance scams

In June, Professor Tom Sorell and Professor Whitty Paper presented a joint paper on 'Victim-Offenders in Scams' at a conference on cybercrime at Nuffield College, Oxford. Attendees included police, academics, probation services, forensic psychologists and sociologists. The paper covered the ethics of victimhood. Professor Sorell is also looking specifically at the characteristics of victimhood in romance scams through using case studies.

Professor Michael Levi has been looking at victims, blame and self-blame, including the narrative around 'victim precipitated crime'. Fraud, including romance scams, is an unusual crime as the victim willingly offers goods or money to the criminal. This can lead to the victim blaming themselves, and failing to identify the perpetrator as blame-worthy or a criminal.

#### Exploring romance scams from a data perspective

Good progress is being made on this part of the project. Randomly sampled data from a dating site and from scam profiles was used, and comparisons drawn for ethnicity, marital status, occupation and age. In many cases, profile pictures for scam profiles have been amended and are more likely to include group photos.

The team analysed the data on age, gender, latitude, longitude, country, ethnicity, occupation, marital status, captions and descriptions (consecutive words sentence structure/ patterns). The tools developed by the team have been very effective at detecting scam profiles. Description was the best classifier for scam profiles, with very few false positives. However, consideration must be given to the possibility of incorrect results and false positives- false positives may be more important for end users than administrators.

## Staffing

Jo Bailey has recently taken over from Helen Muir as Project Manager, based at the University of Warwick.

Beth Sherliker was appointed as project coordinator in June. Beth is based at Warwick. Beth has previously worked at the University of Bristol and Welsh Government.

Jaswinder Mudhar Kaur was appointed in July as a Research Assistant, working with the Trading Standards team in Southampton City Council. Jaswinder has a Masters degree in Health Psychology. Jaswinder will be investigating the support the council and partner organisations, such as Silver Line, 60+ group, and bank managers provide victims of fraud, and what procedures can be improved to prevent repeat victimisation.

Magdalene Ng's employment as a Research Assistant on the project at Warwick came to an end in August. The recruitment process for a Research Fellow/ Research Assistant to be based at Warwick is ongoing.

## Publications and dissemination

Sorell, T, and Whitty, M. T. (June, 2017). Victim-Offenders in Scams. *Joint paper presented at a conference on cybercrime held at Nuffield College, Oxford.*

Whitty, M. T. (June, 2017). Do you Love Me? Psychological Characteristics of Romance Scam Victims. *Cyberpsychology, Behavior, and Social Networking, June 2017*

## Contact

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